

University Faculty Meeting

March 15, 2024

Agenda:

1. Inclusive pedagogy and practices (Amy Smith and Meg Young, Brown Center Faculty Fellows for Inclusive Pedagogy)
2. Comments from President Chris Roellke
3. Comments from Provost Elizabeth Skomp
4. Comments from Faculty Senate Chair Josh Rust
5. Comments from Senior Vice President for Enrollment and Marketing Jeff Gates
6. Comments from Vice President and Chief Financial Officer Jeremy DiGorio; discussion of plans for April 19 University faculty meeting (Jeremy DiGorio and Alan Green, Chair of the Faculty Finance Committee)
7. Update from the FAR Task Force (Dean Yiorgos Bakamitsos, Chair)

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

Provost Skomp gave a brief welcome and then turned the floor over to Meg Young and Amy Smith.

1. Inclusive pedagogy and practices (Amy Smith and Meg Young, Brown Center Faculty Fellows for Inclusive Pedagogy)

Dr. Young expressed appreciation for the opportunity to share with the faculty and acknowledged the multiple meetings she, Dr. Smith, and Dr. Price have had in preparation for these presentations, as well as the fact that some faculty are already implementing the practices that are being shared in these sessions. In recognition of Ramadan, Dr. Young shared a multifaith calendar created by Xavier University. In the spirit of being a student-centered organization and seeking to uplift students and facilitate their sense of belonging in classrooms as safe places for all students, Dr. Young shared that of the 3,478 total students at the institution, 2,392 have reported a religious identity to the institution spanning 59 different identities.

Dr. Young reminded the faculty of the action step shared at the prior presentation (to think about the diversity of identities of the authors used in course materials) and encouraged all to review their course syllabi in light of the multifaith calendar prior the fall semester. She also referenced the email sent out recently from Religious and Spiritual Life regarding fasting during Ramadan and encouraged all to be aware and give support to students who may be struggling.

2. Comments from President Chris Roellke

President Roellke called attention to the chiller plant expansion currently underway designed to improve sustainability and reduce costs and thanked in advance to all involved with the upcoming Hatter Saturday admissions event. He acknowledged academic competition success, noting the Sales Team, and also referenced the men's basketball team reaching the NCAA tournament for the first time in program history. President Roellke advised there would be a

substantial media blitz related to the tournament berth; national news outlets will be on campus on March 16. He thanked all for their patience related to construction and media attention, as well as for their continued creation of engaging opportunities for students to learn.

President Roellke was pleased to report that since the start of his presidency in July of 2020, the university has exceeded \$93M in fundraising, with much of those donations going to student scholarship and support. He also noted a soon-to-be-announced large gift for the Center for Public Opinion Research. President Roellke further acknowledged recent grant-seeking successes.

3. Comments from Provost Elizabeth Skomp

Provost Skomp offered congratulations to the 13 faculty awarded tenure and/or promotion, including seven faculty tenured and promoted to associate professor (four in the College of Arts and Sciences, two in the School of Business Administration, and one in the School of Music) and six faculty promoted to professor (four in the College of Arts and Sciences and one each in the School of Business Administration and School of Music). She noted public honors to come and reminded all of the annual reception in the duPont-Ball Library in the fall.

Provost Skomp provided an update that four finalists had concluded on-site interviews for the open Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences position and thanked the search committee and all who engaged with the candidates during their visits. She appreciated the feedback that has been received on the candidates and is looking forward to bringing the search to a successful conclusion in the near future. Provost Skomp also shared the three-semester appointment of Dr. Kirsten Davis, Professor of Law and Faculty Director of Online Legal Education Strategies, as Provost Faculty Fellow for Generative Artificial Intelligence and Higher Education, noting Dr. Davis will be presenting at the 2024 Colloquium on Teaching and Learning hosted by the Brown Center for Faculty Innovation and Excellence on May 9, 2024.

Provost Skomp provided an update on the 3/2+1 initiative, noting a highly productive conversation with the co-chairs and expressing appreciation for all members of the steering committee and those involved with the pilot program. She shared more than 80 faculty across all three academic units will be participating in the pilot in Fall 2024 and gave advance notice of a forthcoming email, directed to department chairs but sent to all faculty in the spirit of transparency, soliciting additional information about the pilot activities. Provost Skomp reiterated the pilot's purpose in informing full implementation for Fall 2025 and shared the marketing subcommittee is still working on a new name for the overall initiative, as well as hosting focus groups with students and other stakeholders.

Provost Skomp shared the annual call for nominations for Hand Awards, of which there are two – open to faculty on both the DeLand and Gulfport campuses – one focused on research, creative, and professional activity and one on community impact.

4. Comments from Faculty Senate Chair Josh Rust

Dr. Rust shared comments about his impressions about the recent Board of Trustees meetings. He shared the Board is aware of the budgetary challenges of the institution and that President Roellke has acted to foster budgetary transparency. Dr. Rust shared that in his remarks to the Board he thanked them for their service, gave examples of Plus One initiatives, voiced concerns about faculty compensation being below median and its undermining effect on departmental culture, shared the challenges of a 90% acceptance rate and its role in creating bifurcated classrooms with highly talented students and students who may not be prepared for college. He reported the Board seemed relatively responsive to his comments.

Dr. Rust offered substantive comments related to a resolution passed by the Faculty Senate, related to value transparency. Prior to addressing the resolution, noting their generally critical nature, he shared his perspective of what is going and has recently gone right, citing successful passage of the triple policy; the institution's management of COVID; the strategic priorities framework and its focus on traditional strengths of holistic, integrated, and contemporary education; and the 3-2 Plus One initiative. Dr. Rust shared his perception that the faculty like where the institution is trying to go and who is leading that effort.

Dr. Rust clarified the resolution is not about a flawed model, flawed inputs, or concerns of operating in a budget deficit, but that it is about the budget not being an expression of shared values and aspirations. He shared the context that an anonymous accountant should be able to look at an organization's budget and easily discern the values of that organization from how it allocates its financial resources. He noted the budget communicates some positive values, citing no cuts of faculty or departments but also noted two missing values. Dr. Rust offered the stipulation that the 3-2 Plus One initiative be budget neutral makes the commitment to the experiential and relationship-rich education they represent invisible to the budget. He also noted the budget does not provide for a faculty salary increase that would support the faculty reaching median by 2030. He shared the absence of these items in the budget undermines the confidence that is otherwise present related to the trajectory of the institution, citing the critical importance of the institution's commitment to the academic enterprise and the faculty who sustain it being clearly transparent as values in the budget through allocation of funds to those ends. Dr. Rust shared the language of the resolution, "The Faculty Senate resolves that the Faculty Finance Committee work with the administration to identify \$5,000,000 in non-academic expenses to be reallocated to academic activities for the fiscal year 2025 budget."

Dr. Rust clarified the \$5MM is a ballpark number, akin to a professor offering a page count for an assignment, and that the resolution does not require the identified reallocation to be executed, merely identified. He expressed his view that the exercise of quantitative experts from the faculty and administration coming together to identify this reallocation would be incredibly valuable and offered his excitement around what ideas could be generated through such an exercise.

5. Comments from Vice President and Chief Financial Officer Jeremy DiGorio; discussion of plans for April 19 University faculty meeting (Jeremy DiGorio and Alan Green, Chair of the Faculty Finance Committee)

CFO DiGorio reported a fruitful discussion at the 11:00am Faculty Finance Committee meeting regarding the Senate resolution and continued work on strategic priorities in the budget process. He also shared the Board of Trustees was supportive of the institution's planned capital projects at the February meetings and the institution is continuing to pursue a debt issuance. He noted the rating agency Moody's was recently on campus and was impressed with the institution's presentation. CFO DiGorio offered appreciation to the Budget Office for its mitigation efforts due to low enrollment and overall monitoring of the Fiscal Year 2024 budget. He shared the FY2025 budget process has begun, citing faculty and staff compensation as a priority for him as CFO; he is committed to making significant progress in that area moving forward. CFO DiGorio noted enrollments look positive for fall, which will support progress in the area of compensation. He encouraged all to provide comments through an online form (link provided in the chat and in the email announcements for the meeting) to inform the University Faculty Meeting on April 19, 2024, on university finances.

Dr. Green reiterated the positive Faculty Finance Committee meeting discussion of the resolution and its intent to foster conversations about aligning budget with mission and strategic priorities. He reminded all the FFC is charged with hosting a university faculty meeting on the topic of university finances and questions beforehand from faculty would assist in the planning of that meeting. He encouraged faculty to use the aforementioned form to share their ideas about what they would do with additional funds in light of the resolution's exercise to reallocation \$5MM from non-academic to academic expenditures. Dr. Green shared his appreciation for faculty representation on the Board of Trustees committees, noting his own appointment to the Financial Health Committee is helpful for him to integrate activity happening among the Board, the Faculty Senate, the FCC, and the University Faculty Meeting and ensure all areas are looking at the same data and budgeting is conservative instead of aspirational. Dr. Green shared he has already met with Board Chair Steve Alexander and that the FFC meets with administration roughly three times each semester and posts minutes on the Faculty Senate website. He encouraged all to reach out with any questions.

6. Comments from Senior Vice President for Enrollment and Marketing Jeff Gates

Senior Vice President Gates shared the campus is a buzz of activity in preparation for Hatter Saturday and the NCAA tournament. He shared updates on Hatter Saturday, noting 201 accepted students registered (600+ total guests) compared to last year's total of 800 guests attending, and offered his expectation that between the two Hatter Saturday events this year the combined attendees should surpass last year's total. He expressed his appreciation for all involved with Hatter Saturday.

SVP Gates shared data on the Fall 2024 year-to-date application funnel, including enrollment outlook by academic unit. He noted undergraduate applications and acceptances had returned to almost pre-pandemic levels and anticipated it would require 13,000 applications and 8,100

acceptances to yield 725 to 750 first-time-in-college students. SVP Gates noted enrolling an additional 25 FTIC students per year, starting from 725 this fall, would – with expected increases in retention – result in 2,800 undergraduates by 2030. He reported just shy of 300 deposited FTIC students and noted success with transfer students as well (567 applications, 207 acceptances, and 34 deposits), citing increased engaged with faculty during the recruitment process as a reason for success with that population and offering his thanks to those who have been involved. He shared indicators of quality look good, citing alignment with previous average CI scores between 3.80 and 3.85, and noted the institution had resecured local market share with 500 more local admits than last year. SVP Gates acknowledged the discount rate was high last year and is modeling a 70% discount rate for the coming year. FAFSA data has still not been provided to institutions by the federal government; some institutions have been able to provide awards because they use the CSS Profile and they are able to meet full need to all students. Students have the option to be packaged using the CSS Profile at Stetson, but it comes with a fee and almost all are choosing to wait for the FAFSA. SVP Gates also noted some public competitors are discussing moving their deposit deadline from May 1 to June 1, but at this time the institution is maintaining the overall deadline and offering extensions to families concerned about the deadline.

In response to a question about acceptance rates, SVP Gates stated that acceptance rate is calculated as the number of students accepted divided by the number of students who complete an application. Previously a number of applications were not denied when they could have been, resulting in those being excluded as incomplete instead of completed and denied. He shared he plans to deny those students which will bring down the acceptance rate – over 1,000 applicants have been denied already – and also noted the data publicly available in U.S. News and World Report or IPEDS has approximately a two-year lag so it will be a while before current practice are reflected in the acceptance rate. He did, however, note that with platforms on which we pay to participate, we will be able to display updated information more quickly. SVP Gates clarified that all that is needed for an admission decision is an application, transcript, and writing sample.

President Roellke added additional comments that the top two contenders for the J. Ollie Edmunds Distinguished Scholarship have committed to Stetson and at least three additional finalists have committed, noting that in recent years the institution had been unable to secure commitments from its top choices. He noted growth in the Presidential Fellows program from 2 to 20 to 25 in its first three years as a premier program just below the Edmunds program. President Roellke also acknowledged the collaborative efforts of SVP Gates with the CFO, Athletics, and the Stetson community in general.

Provost Skomp reiterated the challenges of recruiting top scholars and acknowledged the importance of securing the Edmunds scholars.

7. Update from the FAR Task Force (Dean Yiorgos Bakamitsos, Chair)

Dean Bakamitsos acknowledged the members of the FAR Task Force and offered the charge the group had received from the Provost: to clarify the FAR form and process. He shared the task force had conducted listening meetings across the divisions and units, as well as with the Faculty

Senate, resulting in two surveys: one to faculty who complete the FAR and one to FAR reviewers. Dean Bakamitsos reported the task force has reviewed the survey responses, as well reviewing peer best practices and has learned the following: 1) faculty generally have issues with FAR, are not happy with the narrative sections, do not agree on its value as a development tool – although it was noted there is considerable variance in how the FAR is used across departments – and are excited about the opportunity to make it automated and less difficult and time consuming to complete and 2) administrators tend to like the FAR more than the faculty, seeing it as a tool to support professional development, but would value limiting the length of the narratives.

Dean Bakamitsos shared the task force's goal is to see a FAR that is easier to complete, adds word limits to narratives, is as automated as possible and appropriate, and is useful in multiple settings including professional development, promotion and tenure processes, and summer grant endorsements. He shared the task force would be finalizing a draft document to distribute for feedback.

Provost Skomp wished everyone a good weekend and Hatter Saturday and concluded the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 1:17pm.