

## **University Faculty Meeting**

February 7, 2025

### **Agenda:**

1. Comments from President Chris Roellke
2. Comments from Provost Elizabeth Skomp
3. Comments from Faculty Senate Chair Steven Smallpage
4. Initial presentation of Spring Break Academic Calendar Driver (Steven Smallpage and Krista Franco)
5. University Faculty Compensation Committee update and survey report (Joe Woodside and Steven Smallpage)
6. Hatter Ready updates (Elizabeth Skomp)

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

Provost Skomp welcomed the faculty, outlined the agenda for the session, and then introduced President Chris Roellke.

### **Comments from President Chris Roellke**

President Roelke began by acknowledging the efforts of Dr. Skomp and Vice President John Downey in planning this semester's series on Free Inquiry and Expression and the Future of Democracy, citing a recent panel on institutional neutrality as a valuable dialogue. He shared excerpts from students' final exam reflections in his higher education course, emphasizing the transformative impact of a liberal arts education at Stetson. He highlighted the positive influence of initiatives like Hatter Ready and the Forward Together Strategic Plan, demonstrating the university's commitment to student engagement and institutional progress. President Roellke reiterated his excitement for the strategic initiatives underway and expressed his gratitude for faculty contributions.

### **Comments from Provost Elizabeth Skomp**

Provost Elizabeth Skomp provided updates on key academic affairs initiatives. She commented on the continued Hatter Ready implementation efforts, acknowledging the work of the steering committee and deans. She emphasized the importance of communication regarding planning and implementation of immersive opportunities in 2025 and beyond. Provost Skomp also provided updates on Generative AI, highlighting the upcoming professional development sessions by Provost Faculty Fellow Kirsten Davis and Stetson's participation in the AAC&U Institute on Generative AI, Pedagogy, and the Curriculum. Additionally, she provided updates on civil discourse initiatives, including Stetson's participation in the University of Chicago's Academic Freedom Institute and a forthcoming visit from Tony Banout, Executive Director of the University of Chicago's Forum for Free Inquiry and Expression. She also mentioned the campus climate survey, which remains open until March 3, and announced a special university faculty meeting on February 21 to discuss faculty governance reform.

### **Comments from Faculty Senate Chair Steven Smallpage**

Faculty Senate Chair Steven Smallpage provided an overview of the faculty governance reform proposal, explaining the rationale for streamlining processes and improving committee structures. He emphasized the importance of faculty participation in the upcoming special meeting to ensure the timely implementation of changes in the future. He also discussed ongoing Faculty Senate initiatives, including a review of academic calendar drivers, the Year 150 public history project, and the future convening of a task force to explore merit review processes.

#### **Initial presentation of Spring Break Academic Calendar Driver (Steven Smallpage and Krista Franco)**

Smallpage and Senate Academic Affairs Chair Krista Franco then introduced proposed changes to the spring break academic calendar driver. After extensive discussion within the Senate, it was determined that aligning spring break with Volusia County Schools was not feasible due to logistical constraints. The proposed change is to shift spring break from week seven to week eight to better align with midterms and student needs. While this change does not require a faculty-wide vote, the Senate has opted to seek faculty input and hold a formal vote at the next University faculty meeting.

#### **University Faculty Compensation Committee update and survey report (Joe Woodside and Steven Smallpage)**

Joe Woodside and Steven Smallpage provided an update on the University Faculty Compensation Committee's recent survey results. They outlined three compensation models: egalitarian, market-based, and balanced and noted the faculty's preference for a combination of market alignment with equitable salary floors and cost-of-living adjustments. The committee emphasized the importance of a long-term commitment to compensation improvements and suggested further faculty discussions to refine models and gather recommendations for the administration. Faculty raised concerns regarding disparities in pay, the desire for a structured merit process, and the need for institutional commitment to sustained compensation increases.

#### **Hatter Ready updates (Elizabeth Skomp)**

The meeting concluded with an update on Hatter Ready from Provost Skomp. She reiterated that implementation of the initiative will be an iterative process. Faculty are encouraged to review the guidelines and FAQ document as they propose immersive experiences, and they are also encouraged to consult with their chair and dean. The discussion also touched on financial aid considerations and the importance of faculty advisors in guiding students through immersive opportunities. President Roellke concluded by acknowledging the challenges and opportunities associated with implementing Hatter Ready and expressed appreciation for faculty efforts in making experiential learning a cornerstone of Stetson's academic mission.

#### **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 1:22 PM.