FACULTY SENATE MEETING MINUTES
Charles Hunter Room, R. Haze Hunter Alumni Center
November 6th, 2025
4:00-5:30 pm
Approved

Attending: Chris Monson, Scott Knowles, Brandon Wiggins, Grant Shimer, Jacob Dean, Ryan Siemers, John Benedict, Xun Sun, Masoud Malekzadeh, David Hatch, Rick Brown, Chelsea Gambles, Kevan LaFrance, Michael Kroff, Elise Leahy, Jon Lee, John Meisner, R. Alexander Nichols, Crystal Koenig, Rachel Parker, Shane Yardley, Nate Slaughter, Hayden Coombs, Jean Subjack, Lee Wood, Chris Younkin, Jon Karpel, Chris Graves, Qian Zhang

Not Attending:

Proxies: Dave Berri for Elijah Neilson.

Guests: Shauna Mendini, James Sage, Camille Thomas, Jake Johnson, Ashley Zimmerman, Matt Mckenzie, Tom Herb, Brandon Walton, William Heyborne

1. Call to order (4:00)

2. Recognition of Presenters and Guests (4:01)
    a. President Mindy Benson
    b. Interim Provost Shauna Mendini
    c. Associate Provost James Sage
    d. Assistant Provost Camille Thomas
    e. Assistant Provost Jake Johnson
    f. Executive Director, Belonging and Engagement and Staff Association President Ashleigh Zimmerman
    g. Graduate Council Chair Thomas Herb
    h. SUUSA Vice President for Academics, Brandon Walton
    i. Senior Director, Center for Teaching Innovation, Matt Mckenzie

3. Approval of Meeting Minutes: (4:02)
    a. Oct 16 Minutes
The minutes were unanimously approved.
4. Events and Announcements: (4:04)
    a. The admissions office has asked to remind faculty that, if they see students on tours, be friendly, say "hi" and welcome them to SUU. Tours are a vital recruiting tool and when faculty are friendly students get a good impression of SUU.

b. QPR trainings the first Tuesday of every month in Escalante room (144 E, in student center), 1-2:30

5. Information Items (4:05)
    a. [Policy 0.0](#) (This is a draft - we are still working on it, but I wanted to share the current version.) [Feedback form](#).

6. Action Items (4:05)
    a. [Policy 6.0 Definition of Faculty](#), [Feedback form](#)

Kevan: Regarding discussion from the last meeting regarding licensure for employment. Can we hire someone with the promise that they will be receiving a license?

Jake: You can't supervise other people without a license, this is why it's in the clinical designation. In order to be a clinical supervisor, you have to have a current license from that jurisdiction. The policy won't limit you if you hire with the promise that they will get that license, if you are confident they will be able to fulfill that role with a current license.

Kevan: I wanted to make sure we had the latitude and that this language wasn't excluding us from hiring someone that by the end of the first year will have their license. If the policy was worded in such a way that we couldn't even hire them until they had a license, that would kill 6 out of the 7 applicants for our current pool.

Jake: If you go down that path, it's going to be a while before they get assigned any clinical supervision, right?

Kevan: Yes, we wouldn't actually assign someone to be supervised as part of their clinical faculty role until they had the license in place. We don't want to run afoul of licensing laws and accreditation.

Jake Johnson: What our policy is concerned about is if you're designated a clinical faculty member, we need you to actually be able to do that thing, and so if you're comfortable as a department saying, well, we're gonna hire them, but they're not going to be assigned any clinical supervision for a period of time, that's your choice as a department.

John Benedict: My department wanted to make sure that non-tenured faculty are given the same weight.as the attending faculty in that passage.

Jake: The terminology, non-tenure track faculty, doesn't show up in that policy, but it does refer to them as terms. They're not considered on an ongoing continuous

appointment like tenure-track faculty are, and so the language of the policy used term faculty. If you think it would be helpful that we put a parenthetical in there, that we suggest that that's also known as non-tenure track faculty, we're happy to do that if that makes it clearer for folks.

John: I think it would. In fact, I probably wouldn't be here mentioning it if that were the case.

Jake: And that's what we talked about in Academic Affairs. I'm happy to put in a parenthetical, that we say: also referred to as non-tenure track faculty.

John: I agree, thank you.

Motion to approve was given by Kevan. Seconded by Crystal. Motion was approved 17/23. 2 Abstained. 4 Non-voting.

b. [Policy 6.36 Course Syllabus](), [Feedback form]()

Nathan: Faculty in my department need a clarification on the words used that ask for a rationale from faculty for the grades given in class, mentioned in 4a.

Jake: Drop down a little bit further into B2G. I think this is going to be the controlling provision on grading as an explanation of how students' achievement of the learning outcomes will be assessed and evaluated. Students just need to know how it is they're going to earn a particular grade and I think that's always been the intent of the syllabus policy.

Rachel: Comment from department on the database. Concerns are a lot of syllabus instructional meetings brought up about the database, and it was often mentioned that we need to put that in policy 6.36. I see that it hasn't been implemented so Im hoping for further explanation on that.

Jake: We look at the syllabus policy as something that is a tool for faculty to help them develop a resource for students. The law, tells us we have to have a database and we've gotten guidance from the USHE system about what they want there, but that has changed fairly quickly, and so we don't want to reference what the USHE guidelines are, and we don't want to tie our faculty in our policy to those things if USHE's just going to keep changing them or make adjustments to them. We would rather this stand as the independent resource for our faculty on our campus about how they develop their syllabi. We'll meet our statutory obligation to have our database, that will exist, but we felt like this is a separate resource that guides our faculty for our instructional purposes,

and we'll just continue to maintain our statutory obligation with our dashboard, and not try and conflate the two things.

Rachel: The kernel of the problem is when we're told that it's going to be in policy, then it's not in policy, so we're just not sure. I guess maybe passing the message along that in some of those trainings, and not necessarily specific to syllabi, if things are said, we need to put that in policy, that that's noted and addressed as to whether or not it does get in or why it doesn't. So, just a note.

Jake: I will tell you, my preference would be when we see the system create a policy on this, which they heretofore have not chosen to do, and manage this by guidelines, that I think we should just keep our policy the way we want our policy, and not try and tie it to what we think the system is gonna do. Unless they adopt their own policy, and then we'll follow it.

Rachel: I agree. I guess we just don't like to get told that it's going to be in policy and not see it in policy as it makes us nervous.

Jake: I apologize for that. We'll try to be clear in our communication as we go forward.

David Hatch: Is this primarily an undergraduate policy? I looked again at the policy today to see.

Camille Thomas: In the USHE policy, it does limit it to undergraduate. We purposely made sure that we didn't just say undergraduate, to leave it open to graduate if they wanted to use it. We also chose not to purposely draw attention to it by saying undergraduate and graduate, so it allowed that room to use if the graduate programs would like to use credit by, for prior learning. USHE policy says it very clearly for undergrad. They don't make any guidance or recommendations for graduate, and we chose to leave it vague
.
Motions were made. Motion was approved 17/23. 2 Abstained. 4 Non-voting.

    c. New Policy - [Credit for Prior Learning](#), [Feedback form](#)

Motion was made by Crystal, seconded by John. 19/23 approved, 1 abstained. 3 non-voting.

    d. Ranking of requested new awards - Online Teaching Award, Adjunct Teaching Award, Graduate Education Teaching Award, and General

Education Teaching Award - do we want to consider an alternative format?
(Faculty Senate award night? Adding text to current awards?)

Chris: Four new awards were proposed at the end of last year.

Crystal: Committee workload concerns. Faculty from my department were largely in support of giving online instructors a shot at awards, with the understanding that there are different considerations with online teaching. We would support revising some of the language to ensure that we're giving online instructors a fair shake at those other awards. My department didn't really think that there needed to be revised language as much for GE and graduate courses. If anything, we thought GE courses might be a gateway to winning some of these awards, because often GE courses are a highlight of the best stuff in our field. So those faculty who gave me feedback, which is only a few of them, were more concerned about recognizing online teaching and graduate teaching, but that was their preference, that we modify the language rather than adding additional new awards with the associated increases in workload that that would entail.

Rachel: My department had worries as well about workload. If we prioritized, it would be online graduate.

Rick: There was a comment about if we didn't have separate awards night or at Tbird awards it could instead be given at the department level award night.

Crystal: Not all colleges have their own award ceremonies.

Chris: The Executive Committee was leaning more towards expanding the language in the current awards to include general education and online. Does this cover the problem that people see?

A few senators spoke in support of this.

A motion was made by David Hatch that we see/get a written final version of the language you are proposing. John seconded the motion.

Rick Brown: Can we get the current wording.

Grant: Please address the following valuation criteria in your nomination: how well the faculty member does the following:
-uses experiential education
-fosters student success

-maintains positive relationships with students
explores teaching methods and integrates those that work
-Excels in a specific instructional focus, such as General, Graduate, or Online education
-reflects on teaching practices, and/or
-engages in professional development related to teaching.

David: Can I withdraw my motion?
Motion was made by Rachel Parker to add the one bullet point. Seconded by Chris Graves.

Motion was approved 18/21. 1 abstained. 2 non-voting.

7. Discussion Items (4:36)
    a. Academic Calendar proposal 1.02

James: I used our current calendar approach and created a new calendar, which has gone through a few versions after meeting with Chris and the Academic Calendar Planning Committee.The only difference between what we currently do in our calendar and what you see in that calendar is to start fall semester on a Tuesday, rather than a Wednesday. Our colleagues in Student Affairs thought about Thunder U and orientation, the induction ceremony, and the bell tower ceremony, and they think they can do all that on Monday and then we can start classes on Tuesday. That's really great for Tuesday-Thursday classes, and it's great for Tuesday-only classes, including Tuesday labs in science and other areas, as well as the performing and visual arts. There are plenty of labs and studio times in those areas. So that's the only change from what we currently see on our calendar. Then in the spring semester, there is just one change. Chris, launched that survey that many of you completed, and it was about academic calendars and adding classes, and an option regarding the Festival of Excellence, which has been historically scheduled on both a Tuesday and a Wednesday. Most recently, it's been on a Tuesday. Chris received feedback from faculty who said they like the idea of recovering a day on that Tuesday in the spring. Maybe the festival could morph a little bit to be one or two evenings of posters and presentations. Because we're not the festival planning committee, we didn't put a lot of thought into that. So I just mocked up a calendar with that change in the spring.

I'll just also point out for fun, that sometimes the world calendar has those Mondays in January for spring semester. Sometimes those start pretty close to New Year's Day. Out of compassion for our off-campus property owners, we try to not compel them to work on weekends, Sunday, or holidays. So, as international students, for example,

start their time at SUU, they might need to get checked into their housing, and they live off-campus so, as long as there are business days on the previous Thursday or Friday, we tend to start on Monday. In the past, if we started on Monday, that might be January 3rd, which would be really tough for off-campus property owners. So everything's the same as we currently have had the academic calendar, except a Tuesday start in the fall and spring. And the mock-up, version 1.02, has the numbers for having the Tuesday for Festival of Excellence as a class instruction day. Summer remains the same, everything else remains the same.

Chris: With the idea being Two-fold, now fall and spring are the same starting, and move-in is a little bit easier, because instead of Monday, it's Tuesday.

James: The reasoning at the committee was that, while move-in might happen on that Monday, certainly a bunch of other campus functions are really helpful for students who are starting their career at SUU in January, to have the registrars, financial aid, everything else open. That was the rationale for starting on that Tuesday. It's not universally agreed upon, because we already lose Mondays for Martin Luther King Day and President's Day, so those who have a Monday, class schedule, or one day a week, or labs, that adds to it. But anyway, that was the proposal. That's where we are now, you can count on many more versions ahead.

Chris: Faculty Senate, we don't vote on this calendar or anything. This is an FYI to show the people in your departments, see if they have any feedback. If they notice something that we didn't, etc.

Rick: Removing the Festival of Excellence, to give us that class day back, creates an uneven number of Tuesdays in the two semesters, which would bother me, personally. My two requests are that we start on the same day of the week in both semesters, and with the same number of days of the week in both semesters. Where exactly those fall matters less to me. Is there a reason why we would want one extra Tuesday in the spring that we don't have in the fall?

James: Not necessarily. There's a count on that calendar in the fall, where it looks like there are 14 Tuesday/Thursdays in the first half of the semester, and 13 Tuesday/Thursdays in the second half of the semester. If we go with the 1.02 version it's 14/14 instead of 14/13. I'll also call attention to the Monday, Wednesday, Friday differences of 19/20 and 18/21. So we don't always achieve parity. What we're looking for is approximately the same number of minutes that are scheduled for instruction. And we don't worry too much about the fall/first session and fall/second session comparisons at least from a federal compliance perspective.

b. [ADA Title II](#) (Matt Mckenzie)

Matt: ADA Title II is changing and it's going to have some pretty broad reaching impacts. The key area that it is going to impact is social media. Educational institutions will be expected to ensure that social media posts are ADA compliant, so if you have a video, it's got captioning. If it's an image, it's alt text, whatever the case is. We do have a lot of student groups that faculty sponsor or oversee, and those student groups will be held to those standards. CTI's going to be working with Heather Ogden, to find ways to train students who are overseeing student groups and social media accounts. If your department has a social media account, you'll want to also make sure you're following ADA compliance.These changes need to be made and we need to be compliant with ADA regulations by April 26th. We have been making progress as an institution. We have been working with faculty and holding internal audits. And during those audits, if a course scored below a certain percentage, we started going in and remediating those courses. We've also established a good working relationship with the DRC, so we're getting ahead of a course that has a student that, for example, is hearing impaired, and needs to make sure all of the videos have accurate captioning. So, they give us a list and say, here is the list of courses we need you to make sure have accurate captioning. CTI goes in, makes sure those videos have accurate captioning or a transcript, and so we're staying ahead, but that's a very reactive approach. The one area we still have to work on are VPATs. VPATs are Voluntary Product Accessibility Templates. They're basically a form that a company fills out and says this is what our product can do and can't do when it comes to accessibility. If you're using McGraw-Hill MindTap, or Cengage Connect, or Pearson, or any of your publisher resources, they have a VPAT. We need to be looking at those and determining whether those are acceptable. In a lot of cases, it may be a very small tweak, and you may have to do one little thing different for a student, but you can continue using that product, even if the VPAT fails in one area or another. However, if the VPAT has significant issues and significant areas that are non-compliant, it can lead to a pretty big lawsuit. The Los Angeles Community College in 2023 paid two students $240,000 because they were using McGraw-Hill MindTap for their math class, and it was not compliant. The one area that I'm going to be working on is putting together a way for you to submit either sending us a VPAT to look at it, or asking about the product you're using and if you can get the VPAT? We're gonna be adding that to our accessibility cleanup file, or form to start going through your course and make it accessible.

Grant: Will there be a CTI training video?

Matt: Yes, we have some training courses. We're revising those a little and conduct some webinars next semester.

Chris Younkin: How does this apply to materials that are linked outside of Canvas or library materials?

Matt: We do need to be mindful of this – most likely have an alternative so it will be accessible. Regarding assessments, we do have the ability to choose our images, etc. They will need to work with the DRC. This can't reduce the rigor of the course.

Chris Monson: It is likely you will need to make some changes. Understand that this is a federal law request, not CTI.

Grant: Is this a situation where a student raised an issue and faculty didn't change the issue?

Matt: Yes. It was too far into the semester for the student to withdraw.

    c. Any new business brought by senators
Kevan: I've noticed over the last several years that right around graduation and commencement a number of students need to pack up their apartments and move out before graduation is over. I wonder if there is something the university could do to advocate with landlords on behalf of students. I would love us to support them effectively if there is something we can do.

James: Student Affairs has their finger on this. I can look into it to see how SUU interfaces with property owners. MORE HERE

Grant: This is an issue with SUU housing as well.

James: There is a 24hour turnaround after their last final. I think there is some flexibility not sure if students know that. I'll look into it.

Kevan: I have one more from a faculty member about –if actual class and meeting time information was being done by guidelines and not policy, like, totally makes sense to me. One of my faculty did raise a concern about public searchable things, and especially in light of doxing concerns. He's just concerned that if actual class meeting times, location, and phone numbers are being listed in a publicly searchable database, that creates some potential problems.

about being doxxed and someone who's not involved in the class starting to reach out to students. So I was wondering if there's ways we can take out some of the level of detail out of the database, that the public doesn't necessarily need, but students do.

Camille: There is an external and internal facing syllabus.

8. Standing Committee Updates (5:12)
    a. Faculty Review Board (Michael Kroff)
    b. Parking Ticket Arbitration Committee (Victoria Zhang)
    c. Staff Association Liaison
    d. General Education Committee (David Hatch)
    e. Honors Council (David Hatch)
    f. Graduate Council (Thomas Herb)
    g. University Curriculum Committee (Rachel Parker)
    h. Student Association Liaison (Brandon Walton)
    i. Benefits Committee (Cody Bremner)
    j. Faculty Awards Committees
        i. Distinguished Faculty Lecturer (Christopher Graves)
           We've got all our submissions, and we'll be meeting next week to discuss and have a final decision by the 20th, just before Thanksgiving.
        ii. Outstanding and Distinguished Educator Award Committee (Crystal Koenig)
        iii. Distinguished Scholar/Creative Award Committee (Kevan LaFrance)
        iv. Distinguished Faculty Service Award Committee (Jon Lee)

9. Reports (5:14)
    a. Treasurer's Report (Jacob Dean)
    b. Past President's Report (Scott Knowles) – Academic Affairs Committee, University Faculty Leaves Committee
       Meeting with Academic Affairs, nothing to report yet.
    c. President Elect's Report (Brandon Wiggins) – UCFSL, Workload and Faculty Salary Equity Committee (WaFSEC), Ad Hoc committee on policy outside of 6.0
    d. President's Report (Chris Monson) – Policy/Procedure Arbitration Committee, President's Council, Dean's Council
       Teaching AI is a concern for the university and we will be hearing more about teaching this to our students.

10. Executive Session? Motion was made and 2nd to move to an executive session. (5:16)