Faculty Senate Executive Committee Meeting
Minutes
November 6th, 2023

Please email corrections to Faculty.Senate@nau.edu.

1. **Call to order – Kate Ellis**
   Faculty Senate President Kate Ellis calls the meeting to order at 3:01pm.
   Those Attending: Kate Ellis, Karen Pugliesi, Roger Bounds, John Georgas, Sara Rinfret, Blake Rayfield, Blue Brazelton, Gioia Woods, Tarang Jain, Michael Smith, Pete Fule, Donna Simon, Melissa Lawton, Jill Navran, John Tingerthal, Marco Cabrera Geserick, Andrew Stevens

2. **Approval of Agenda and Minutes – Kate Ellis**
   The 11/6 Agenda is voted on and **approved.** The 10/9 Faculty Senate Executive Committee meeting minutes are voted on and **approved.**

3. **Faculty Senate President's Report – Kate Ellis**
   Faculty Senate President Kate Ellis gives her report.
   - Recent item forwarded from Senate email (Panel supporting Palestine) Letters were sent to Senate that voiced concern.
   - Response to this letter discussed. Collaborative statement sent out regarding the support of free speech?
   - Challenges associated with supporting free speech discussed.
   - Behind the scenes outreach has been occurring
   - NAU currently ranked very high in FIRE ranking for supporting free speech.
   - Some Faculty are concerned regarding a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request.
   - Syllabi have been requested from the classes that fulfill ethnic diversity and global awareness.
   - We should create a plan to support faculty who may fall victim to these claims and requests.
   - This request was sent out to all 3 universities. The request regards syllabi and training for hiring committees.
   - Discussion on creating a plan to help support faculty.
   - Discussion of referring requests for comment to Kimberly Ott
   - Discussion on how administration can respond and support Faculty.
   - Discussion of how to stay safe on social media and take a cautious approach.

4. **Provost's Office Report – Karen Pugliesi**
   Provost Pugliesi gives her report.
   - Last week there was an ABOR Standing Committee meeting, where the committee on Operations and Governance approved the creation of the College of Nursing at NAU.
   - Another point in this meeting was a broad discussion regarding K-12 and what the university system can do to help strengthen this area. There has been concern due to

the fact there is a lower percentage of High School students pursuing secondary education compared to other states.

- They also asked for the three state universities to give an update on financial wellbeing. NAU currently looks great regarding their fiscal situation.
- Provost Pugliesi recently returned from a trip to China, celebrated the success of the one plus two plus one program that partners American Universities with Chinese Universities.
- We currently do not have any more openings for Regent's professors.
- We have just put in place three new career development coordinators in CAL, CEFNS and SBS. These will help students and continue to strengthen the 100% Career Ready Program.
- We are continuing the refresh of our First Year Learning Initiative (FYLI), Cody Canning and Michelle Miller will be leading a group of faculty experts who will advise them on how to better design courses and programs with a focus on first year learners. They will also be refreshing guidelines for faculty to help assist in improving first year learning experiences.
- College leadership teams have also been trained on tools and frameworks regarding curricular complexity. We are also asking these leadership teams to look at course outcomes and find areas where we can strengthen course design and coordination.
- Statewide, in conjunction with the Arizona Attainment Alliance, NAU's A++ Program has secured intergovernmental agreements with most of the community college districts. We will now begin creating focused academic pathways in conjunction with these community colleges.
- Deans are currently submitting draft action plans that reflect the creation of academic program portfolios. These help us answer the question, "what kinds of programs should we be offering online?"
- Vice Provost Roger Bounds and his team are currently working on developing guidelines focused on the recruitment, onboarding, support, and evaluation of part time faculty.
- Provost Pugliesi and Faculty Senate President Kate Ellis had a discussion with Kerry Thompson regarding curriculum processes. The outcome from this meeting is that we need to recognize there is tension between the desire for strong faculty governance over curriculum and the impact this has on workload. There were some opportunities identified to make changes to aid in this effort, without compromising faculty governance.
- Vice Provost Roger Bounds says that there will soon be a draft sent to the FSEC regarding changes to COFS. This draft will be reviewed in Spring. Some items that have been updated are:
  - Updates regarding Teaching Tracks.
  - Language clarifying the timing of promotions.
  - Changing of the current Faculty Grievance Process.
  - Changes to reflect current Committee practices.
- Ex-Officio Gioia Woods brings up potential tension that is in place regarding career track faculty participating on Annual Review Committees in which they review tenure track faculty. There has been response from some faculty that this feels inappropriate.

- Dr. Bounds states that a different perspective would be that career track faculty have an even better understanding of teaching as it is their focus. In that case it would be more beneficial for them to review teaching practices.
- Donna Simon also adds the fact that there are many different perspectives that go into evaluations, and just because there is a difference does not mean there is a lack of beneficial opinions.
- Efforts have begun to look at the Annual Review Process and finding ways to simplify it and create a more efficient process.
- Sara Rinfret has taken the lead on improving faculty's ability to engage in professional development, there will be a group created to discuss this topic and potential improvements.
- Ex-Officio Gioia Woods asks if there are any retirement incentives that will be released soon.
- Provost Pugliesi says there currently is nothing in line regarding retirement incentives. There will be the increase in faculty pay by 3%, initially this was scheduled for January 1st, but after consulting the University Budget Advisory Board, this has moved back to April 1st.

5. **Teaching Expectations – Continuing Discussion**
   Kate Ellis asks the FSEC to continue the discussion that occurred during the Academic Advisory Committee Meeting, this discussion was focused on Teaching Expectations.
   - Chair of the Council on Learning, John Tingerthal, discusses that one of the takeaways from this meeting was there is an uncertainty of how to proceed.
   - One topic discussed was to move the information of Teaching Expectations into new faculty Offer Letters. This way, moving forward, we can make expectations very clear for new faculty.
   - Faculty also seem to be adopting and accepting the Best Teaching Practices Document that was released.
   - There is also a need to simplify the Teaching Portfolio Guidelines, as consensus from faculty is that the document is large and complicated.
   - John Tingerthal also states that there is a lack of knowledge regarding what different departments are doingfor annual review, if we find out what people are doing, we can find a successful process and create a model.
   - Provost Pugliesi suggests that we start by thinking about the first step, which is creating a university wide statement of what those expectations are for all faculty. After that foundation is set, we can use that to integrate into different processes around the University.
   - This can also help us find what faculty need in the way of a Faculty Handbook and what should be included in it.
   - It is important that we provide faculty with good, valuable formative feedback from annual reviews.
   - Vice Provost Roger Bounds suggests that these teaching practices can be added to certain hiring processes, then we can implement it into annual review processes.
   - Ex-Officio Gioia Woods recommends that there be a consistency across all the domains.

- Faculty Senate President Kate Ellis directly relates this topic of Teaching Expectations to the President's plan of Student Momentum.
- Chair of Council on Faculty Rights and Responsibilities, Michael Smith, mentions the difference in courses and how these principles should not be too prescriptive. Often an upper division course may need different strategies and practices when compared to a first-year course.
- President Ellis states that Faculty members will not be exercising every practice stated in these guidelines every day, nor does the annual review look at what is done every day. But it is beneficial to provide examples for faculty when they are creating their annual review portfolio, they can include examples that are outlined in this document and discuss how this improved their teaching.
- The goal is to introduce this Teaching Portfolio Guide to new faculty as a resource to use.
- John Tingerthal states that the next step would be to address the feedback received from faculty, this feedback would include making the Portfolio Guideline broader and simpler. He also states that this is a living document and can be updated over time.
- President Ellis also mentions the current use of student opinion surveys across campus. Each department uses these in different ways and because of this some faculty must defend their work specifically in response to student opinion surveys in their annual review as it may have a large impact in promotion and tenure.
- Provost Pugliesi believes that NAU often relies too much on student opinion surveys, and often a faculty member could implement and utilize best teaching practices that are not well received by students, causing students to respond negatively in the surveys.

6. **AI Next Steps – Continuing Discussion**
   The FSEC discusses next steps regarding Generative AI.
   - Penny Dolin, the Chair of the AFC, is currently working with ASU on sharing an AI Course for faculty to NAU and the U of A. This course was originally developed by ASU to help educate faculty on Generative AI.
   - Senate President Kate Ellis suggests the goal of creating a syllabus statement that provides faculty and students with a baseline of how Generative AI will be used in an academic setting.
   - FSEC Member Donna Simon raises concern for a General Statement, as many different faculty have completely different perspectives and requirements.
   - Currently John Georgas and John Tingerthal have been creating a NAU webpage on Generative AI. The link is: https://in.nau.edu/academic-affairs/genai/
   - This page includes:
     - Information regarding the UN statement on Generative AI.
     - Draft Syllabus statements.
     - General faculty guidelines on Generative AI use.
   - John Tingerthal states that he has not heard a lot of faculty members with the mindset of "I do not know what to do," regarding Generative AI. This may change due to a majority of faculty currently focused on midterms, leaving them with less time to focus on the use of Generative AI for future courses.

- Senate President Kate Ellis shares an idea of creating different levels of a syllabi statement, in which faculty can choose what level they want to adopt for their course.
- Vice Provost John Georgas states a support for that idea, but there is an uncertainty of what this statement includes and how to word it.
- President Ellis also suggests potentially adding this as a section to the academic integrity policy, thus not having to create an entirely new statement.
- Vice Provost John Georgas mentions the Academic Standards Committee discussed this topic last year and added Generative AI as a potentially prohibited technology, giving freedom to faculty to categorize whether they want to prohibit it in their course. This change was added to the policy that defines academic dishonesty.
- Michael Smith also raises the concerns of Generative AI leading to potential biases in the classroom, thus violating NAU's inclusive excellence standards.
- The FSEC decides that the next step is to develop a syllabus statement that addresses Generative AI under the Academic Integrity Policy.
- The FSEC continues to discuss potential wording for a statement that can be added under the Academic Integrity Policy that will set a baseline in discouraging the use of Generative AI to plagiarize content.

7. **Council & Committee Reports**
   FSEC Treasurer Blake Rayfield gives an update from Budget Committee, who have been focusing on promotion raises.
   - Recently there was a change to promotion pay which in some cases lowered the raises of faculty. This change was not well communicated to everyone, thus many faculty are only learning about it after they have received the promotion raise.
   - The Budget Committee has met to discuss this and try and find the reason for this change.
   - Vice Provost Roger Bounds mentions that the changes of these raises were due to a large campus wide effort that occurred that changed CUPA targets.
   - The previous promotion raise rate had been in place for only about 2 years, in which these totals were higher than the previous raise totals.
   - Dr. Bounds also stated that the change to a flat rate increase instead of a potential percentage increase was to better prepare and plan.
   - Some questions that the Budget Committee had regarding these changes:
     - Was there any faculty input in the process of discussing these changes?
     - How were these changes communicated to faculty?
   - Provost Pugliesi responds saying NAU's recent goal was to improve faculty compensation. She states that we are very interested in equity, but there are different external markets for faculty and to ignore those would have a negative consequence on NAU's ability to recruit and retain faculty. Because of this we have looked to implement faculty compensation through salary floors and other CUPA benchmark raises.

- Provost Pugliesi also states that when promoting faculty, we are not promoting them in relation to the external market, but instead looking at their performance and contributions to the university, then recognizing that as an internal context.
- Treasurer Blake Rayfield raises concerns regarding faculty engagement in discussing this change, along with the fact that this change was not communicated and will surprise many faculty going up for promotion in the coming years.
- President Kate Ellis states that there was some faculty involvement due to this topic going to the Budget Advisory Board which has a senate representative.
- Treasurer Blake Rayfield asks what the next steps of this process would be regarding these raise changes.
- President Ellis states that the Committee could bring an alternate recommendation for these raise changes to the Senate. She also states that these changes were made in place not to take money away from faculty, but to prevent a vast increase in a pay gap between professors.

8. **New Business/ Old Business/ Adjourn – Kate Ellis**
   Meeting is adjourned at 5:11 pm.