

University System of Georgia (USG) Faculty Council Spring Meeting
Report made to University Senate

Meeting Details:

Date: March 31, 2017

Location: USG Systems Office (Atlanta)

Time: 8:30 am – 5:00 pm

GCSU Representative: Nicole DeClouette, Ph.D.

USGFC Chair, Dr. Victoria Smith-Butler, called the meeting to order at 10:00 am by. The meeting start time had been postponed due to the Governor closing state buildings until 10 am due to the collapse of I-85 the previous night.

REMARKS:

Chancellor Dr. Steve Wrigley

Below are Chancellor Wrigley's remarks regarding the legislative session that ended late last night:

Budget:

- The budget that passed is good for the system.
- Employer share of insurance premium increased.
- Enrollment is fully funded.

Legislation:

HB 280 "Campus Carry" Bill

- Passed the house and the senate late last night.
- Exceptions were made that restrict carrying in spaces on campus such as faculty offices, rooms where disciplinary hearings are held, and move-on-when-ready sites.
- The bill is in a different form from last year's bill. It does address the concerns of the governor from last session. Chancellor Wrigley guesses that the governor is going to sign it because it does address the issues he raised last year. This is the 7th year that the bill has been addressed, and Dr. Wrigley said that it has evolved.
- July 1st is when the law would go into effect if the governor signs it. Campuses should sit tight until they hear from the USG office after the attorneys have had a chance to look at it.

Question: Does this mean that faculty will not be allowed to carry in faculty offices?

Response: Dr. Wrigley said that they will have to look at it first but he guesses that faculty will not be allowed to carry.

Tuition Cap Bill

- Did not pass.
- The bill will likely come up each year.

- BOR sets tuition.
- Chancellor Wrigley has spent the past couple of years repairing relationships with legislators so they can now have those discussions.

HB 51 Campus Sexual Assault Bill

- Did not pass

HB 37 Sanctuary Campus

- Passed but does not really apply to us.

Question was raised regarding:

2.5.2 Ex-officio Faculty Chair (under 2.5 Presidential Authority and Responsibilities of BOR Policy).

- President announced he is taking over the senate at Darton/Albany State consolidation.
- Most presidents are ex-officio; they come, they can add to the agenda.
- What happened at Darton is that now the president will have the power to set/cancel meeting times, set the meeting agenda, etc.
- Victoria polled the USGFC and the majority of respondents said that their presidents are ex-officio but do not run senate meetings.
- Discussion will continue into the future. Chancellor Wrigley suggested that the senate chairs meet with the President.
- Scotty referred to the AAUP red book: The purpose of the senate is to make recommendations. They do not have the authority to make decisions. Faculty can go on record that this is their input on this issue but then they need to stand back to see what the decision makers actually do.

REMARKS:

USGFC Chair, Victoria Smith-Butler

USGFC is making progress. Good relationship with Dr. Wrigley. Good communication by phone and email with him. He is open to ideas.

Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Dr. Marti Venn

Overload policies

- Systems office has heard of campuses making policies about overloads.
- SACS COC doesn't want to see so many overloads.
- There are a lot of decision-making variables that go into these decisions on campuses. Has to be a function of the campus taking into consideration their fiscal issues on campus. Most of campuses have budgets in the red. Macon and South GA, student enrollment has dropped. Not getting money from the state, so campuses have to figure out what formula they use on their campus.
- There's not one board policy on overload policies.
- Scheduling is a factor too.

Comment from the floor: Campus has cut programs, cut faculty, and faculty is not represented at the board table making data assessment decisions. The board sets the budget. Cutting the budget means loss of jobs, and the subsequent teaching overloads.

Response by Dr. Venn: Budgets are developed with the campuses through finance. She suggested inviting Shelley Nickel to the fall 2018 USGFC meeting to walk through how the money comes to USG, then to budget hearings, etc..

Comment from the floor: We see Increased administrative costs across the system while cutting faculty positions.

Response by Dr. Venn: Addressing administrative bloat is hard to do because we are not looking at the same data. She suggested having a data-rich discussion with the data in front of us at the fall meeting. Campus administration makes those decisions (faculty loss) not USG system. There's nothing that the system can do. President and Provost decide if programs are deactivated due to low enrollment. Provosts take it to faculty and units and ask, "How are we going to address this?" Faculty own the curriculum on their campuses (ideally). The BOR wants to see deactivation of low enrollment and low activity of programs before proposing new programs.

Comment from the floor: Faculty morale in the USG is not good.

Response by Dr. Venn: Know that your presidents are advocating for you at the USG offices.

REMARKS

Vice Chancellor for Communications and Government Affairs, Charlie Sutlive

- Last year was a tough year for the USG legislative-wise. We need to talk more about the role of faculty with our stakeholders. How do we refocus on the role of faculty?
- The system office started Campus Spotlight at BOR meetings: Focus on the role of faculty in academics. Faculty member and students come to board meetings and share what is happening on their campuses. Board is hearing first hand about the role of faculty and academics. Trickle across with stakeholders (like legislators).

Comment from the floor: USG has to help us change our image. USG communication has been focused on consolidation (and other false narratives).

Response by Charlie: Reach out to communications person on campus to talk with them about the stories we want to tell about the work that we do. Give us a chance. We have a campaign to highlight the work of faculty. Share stories.

Question from the floor: What do legislators get in terms of stories? If you want to put faculty and students back at the center of what we do, get legislators on our campuses. Tell them our stories. Keep it to 1-3 highlights.

Response by Charlie: We can't assume that they know who we are, what we do, and why we are important. BOR has not been doing enough outreach either. Social media is a critical platform to get stories out. We need to turn legislators into supporters. We do have many supporters across the street. This is the best budget we've had in the past few years. They are

covering our health care. Last year they didn't. Focus on localized stories, what our work means to students and to their communities. Plans to stay in GA help too.

Legislative update from Charlie:

- Merit increases are in the budget.
- USG consistent that they are not supporters of the campus carry bill in any form. The amendments/exceptions added are admin offices, faculty offices, hearings, and move on when ready classes.
- USG will work extensively with campuses if passed by the Governor.
- Email Charlie. He wants to be engaged on campus as part of his professional development.

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The search to replace Dr. Houston is moving along. The committee sent forth three names to Chancellor Wrigley.

USG Retiree Council Report: Dennis Marks

- USG Retirement Council has reps from each institution. The council parallels Faculty Council and Staff Council.
- Major concerns: to improve communications with retirees
- Emphasized two way communications between councils and systems office
- Health insurance has been big concern. Last year every retiree had to be contacted to make a choice about his/her health care.
- Instead of defined contribution model, now it is a fixed amount of money. Retirees had to sign up with a private exchange.
- Looking for faculty council rep on retirees council

AAUP Updates: Robert Scott "Scotty":

- AAUP also have fall and spring meetings.
- Spring meeting they are looking at what ought to be in a faculty manual.
- Academic hearings for faculty, they will vet it if is beyond a local level; AAUP can sanction a campus—put the campus on the sanction list.
- Status of women in the profession. Not paid as much as men and this is still true.
- AAUP GA chapter has one paid employee—a lobbyist who keeps us abreast of what is happening legislatively.
- Red book is all about faculty governance.
- Log onto the website for more information: aaup.org

Discussion Items

Rightsizing

Darton and Albany State consolidation

- Have seen severe enrollment drops since the consolidation.
- Consolidation committee recommends which programs to deactivate.

- Faculty received one-year letter of non-renewal. Funding will be cut \$5-7 million so they have to let people go. Factored into decisions about who to let go include credentials, seniority, and evaluations.
- If you ever go through this process, know what your administration is doing. Make sure the procedures of the policy for how people are terminated are followed.

GA Southern and Armstrong

- Are allowed to keep the programs on their campuses for the next 5 years to get students through. Looking at duplicate programs. Unique programs.
- Committees are working together around the clock to figure this out.
- Athletic 2 (Armstrong) students aren't allowed to stay at Armstrong so next year they will not have an athletic program, which is a morale buster.

Bainbridge College and ABAC

- First told would merge with ABAC but then told only arts and sciences would go to ABAC and others would be merged with technical college (health sciences and certificate programs).
- Not sure if technical college will hire the professors.
- TCSU does not have tenure so those who are tenured would lose that.
- Told not to share things with the community.

Comments from the floor:

- Tenure resides at the institution alone (not within the system).
- We have had 7 consolidations. Difficult and painful process. Losing faculty, staff, and students. Affects morale so that people do not want to stay in USG.
- Let consolidation people know that they should have talked to this body. Marti will take this back.
- What's the next step we need to take to deal with this (after venting)?
 - Support colleagues by writing letters of support stating that this is why this faculty member is being let go (consolidation).
 - Also share list serve information with colleagues looking for jobs.
- Reach out to media. Don't let USG tell our story because they are not living our story. Reach out to people who have been through this process. The representative from Augusta University has served on 8 consolidation committees, so she is a good resource.
- Valdosta is downsizing. 10 faculty members in her department had to do overloads due to letting people go.
- Armstrong and GSU are 50+ miles apart how will senate meet? ABAC and Bainbridge are two hours apart. Video conferencing to handle senate meetings.
- Marti suggest we form some working groups with action items and find a pathway forward.
- The group suggested the following committees: Ad-hoc on consolidation, ad-hoc on administrative bloat, ad-hoc on administrative evaluations.

Elections of officers:

Chair Elect: Scott Pagan (UGA)

You have to be a rep for one year to be Chair.

Secretary: Sarah Mergel (Dalton State College)

Parliamentarian: Juone Brown (FVST)

Respectfully submitted by Nicole M. DeClouette