

Faculty Senate Minutes
Southwest Tennessee Community College
Tuesday, April 18, 2023, 3:00 PM
Macon Cove Campus, MAC 195

1. Call to order and roll

Joyce Johnson called the meeting to order at 3:00. Doug Branch took the roll.

Joyce Johnson (22-24) **President**

Division Senators, Humanities, Social Sciences, and Mathematics

Doug Branch (21-23) **Secretary**

Lake Newton (22-24)

Julie Lester (21-23) (absent)

Annie Sultana (22-24)

MaLinda Wade (21-23) (absent)

Division Senators, Business and Technologies

Timothy Harrison (21-23)

Lisa Hadley (22-24)

Division Senators, Health and Natural Sciences

Shilpa Desai (22-24) **Treasurer**

Open Position (22-24)

Rachel "Shelley" Trigg (21-23)

Department Senators

Lindsey Shaidnagle (22-24) Allied Health

Kimberly Taylor (21-23) Business and Legal Studies (absent)

Tad Lauritzen Wright (21-23) Communications, Graphic and Fine Arts

Rosalyn Rogers (21-23) Education, Criminal Justice, and Human Services (absent)

Shaun Quinn (22-24) EMS

Stewart White (22-24) Engineering Technologies **Vice-President**

Emily Ford (21-23) Languages and Literature **Parliamentarian**

Derrick Slaughter (22-24) Natural Sciences

Emily Taylor (22-24) Nursing (absent)

Khalil Rassy (22-24) Mathematics

Latorya Parker (21-23) Technologies (absent)

Shannon Little (21-23) Social and Behavioral Sciences

2. The reading and approval of the minutes.

The body approved the minutes from the March, 2023 Faculty Senate meeting.

3. Special Guest: Dr. Tracy D. Hall, college president

Dr. Hall addressed several items she understood to be faculty concerns:

One of these was about divisive concepts legislation passed by the state legislature. Dr. Hall believes that the legislation should not affect what we do in the classroom, other than to reinforce the idea that we should not proselytize. She pointed out, too, that we do have a recorded session with the TBR legal team, discussing this topic, from September and that faculty would be welcome to see it. She also suggested that the college consider another meeting with TBR legal representative Heather Stewart so that we might understand any updates to the legislation's ramifications.

Dr. Hall wished to get a sense of how faculty are feeling in terms of campus safety. A few senators mentioned not feeling very secure, citing incidents of disturbances involving students behaving threateningly in the hallways and, at the Union campus, the fact that anybody can walk in and out of the high school without anybody seeming to notice. Recent shootings near the motels close to the Macon campus have been concerning as well.

Dr. Hall pointed out that we do have active shooter drills, meant as a response to these fears and that we have a government liaison, Chuck Thomas, who is in touch with the city when there are particular matters of concern. Dr. Hall urged faculty to be sure to contact the president's office whenever we invite special guests, especially anybody possibly controversial or an elected officeholder. Dr. Hall pointed to the fact that we have 19 post-certified, full-time police officers and several part-time officers as well. She also noted that we have a close relationship with the Memphis Police Department. Having pointed out, though, that the college does take active steps toward making our campus feels safer, she said she wanted to hear about faculty concerns in this area.

Concerning the VPAA search, Dr. Hall noted that we have selected seven finalists for online interviews, after which we will decide whom to invite to campus for interviews. She encouraged faculty to attend those interviews, which faculty will learn about soon, when the schedule is out. The goal is to make an offer for the position by May 30 and have the new VPAA begin by July 10.

Dr. Hall next encouraged attendance at the upcoming open house and career fair on April 20. There will be 35 or 40 employers attending and this, Dr. Hall said, was a time for the college to shine in public and a time "to brag."

4. Special Guest: Bonnie Suderman, Vice-President for Academic Affairs

Bonnie began by saying that we will need to cut about \$900,000 from the budget, with the hope that we increase enrollment. Unfortunately, we have had to make four faculty cuts, of faculty from programs that are not growing. Those cuts were in Business,

Sociology, Technology, and Engineering. She mentioned that this was done with kindness and in the interest of letting people know as quickly as possible. She also pointed out that these were faculty members the college regrets losing. The current cut does not necessarily mean that we are safe for another year, when we will have to cut another \$900,000 if our enrollment does not improve. On a positive note, though, there are hopeful signs of improving enrollment.

Bonnie spoke, too, about the need for more credentialing in the middle of programs, which we hope would help with retention and workforce readiness. This is a program about which the college is enthusiastic.

Responding to questions about the college moving to a quarter system, Bonnie said that such a change had been discussed, but it's not happening any time soon. If it does, it won't be a "top down" decision, and it will happen slowly. Relevant, too, to the discussion of shorter terms possibly helping with retention, we discussed the problem of students sometimes not knowing that they've registered for FLEX classes and their notion that these might be "lite" classes, leading to their disappointment when they do not do well.

Responding to concerns about faculty not receiving their accustomed "1/32" pay during summer school or that adjuncts might be hired rather than full-time faculty, Bonnie assured the senate that there has been no such discussion within the administration.

5. Reports from senate officers and senate committees

A. Stewart White: Report on regular SEC meeting with Bonnie Suderman, VPAA, and Sindy Abadie, Special Assistant to VPAA

Stewart said that most of the discussion from that meeting had been repeated by our special guests. One thing that wasn't mentioned is that the faculty can expect, soon, a cancellation memo, outlining the dates on which classes would be cancelled and the minimum enrollment numbers.

B. Joyce Johnson: President's cabinet report

Joyce echoed the encouragement for faculty to attend the upcoming open house and career fair. She noted as well that conversions of term positions will be starting soon, especially for faculty members who have been in term positions for six or more years. Such faculty members would be given the choice of whether to have their positions converted. If they choose to do so, others may apply for the position. If they choose not to, the members could remain in term positions, which are always more liable to be cut during times of financial exigency.

Joyce noted that we will be hiring a Vice President of Human Resources, People, and Culture. She responded to concerns that we are hiring a new VP by pointing out that this is not a new position, just a new name for the former HR Director.

C. Thomas King: Grade Appeals Committee

Thomas, noting a lack of participation by some members of the committee, said that the committee is considering changing the make-up of the committee, especially necessary since many more cases have been coming before the committee.

D. Thomas King: Faculty Awards Committee

Thomas noted that the new practice of requiring electronic submission for award nominations worked fine, although electronic voting presented issues. He noted that there were still fewer than optimal submissions for individual awards, although there would be winner for each award. He suggested that in the future we move toward award nominations coming at the beginning rather than the end of the semester, as people generally have more time at the beginning.

E. Stewart White: Report on senate elections

On the departmental level, Arnetria Taylor will represent Business and Legal Studies. Emily Ford was re-elected as the senator from Languages and Literature, Shannon Little from Social and Behavioral Sciences, and Tad Lauritzen-Wright from Communications, Graphic, and Fine Arts.

Thomas King was elected division senator for Humanities, Social Sciences, and Mathematics. Doug Branch and Julie Lester were re-elected to their positions in that division.

Tim Harrison was re-elected to his position in the division of Business and Technologies.

John Murrell and Carlito Chiong were elected to represent the division of Health and Natural Sciences.

6. Old Business

Regarding prior discussions about the proposed evaluation instrument, the senate agreed and voted on new language for items 3, 4, and 5. We asked Lisa Hadley to submit that new language to Dr. Suderman as soon as possible.

7. New Business

Stewart White conducted elections for the senate executive committee. Stewart will continue to serve as vice-president, Shilpa as treasurer, and Doug as secretary. Thomas King will replace Emily Ford as parliamentarian. All were fulsomely thanked for their service.

8. Adjournment

Joyce adjourned the meeting at 5:40, thanking everybody for their work all year. She reminded all senators to bring up at our meetings faculty concerns. She also reminded all senators that certificates honoring their service would be available soon in Bridge.

Respectfully Submitted,
Doug Branch
Faculty Senate Secretary

