

Faculty Senate Meeting Agenda

Southwest Tennessee Community College

Conducted Via Microsoft Teams

Tuesday, September 8, 2020, 3 PM

Call to order and roll

Faculty senate president Bill Summons called the meeting to order at 3:00. Secretary Doug Branch called the roll:

William Summons (20-22) **President**

Division Senators, Humanities, Social Sciences, and Mathematics

Doug Branch (19-21) **Secretary**

Annie Sultana (20-22)

Thomas King (19-21)

Ed Reid (20-22)

Melissa Reyna (19-21)

Division Senators, Business and Technologies

Kimberly Taylor (19-21)

Derrick Wheatley (20-22)

Division Senators, Health and Natural Sciences

Shilpa Desai (20-22) **Treasurer**

Joyce Johnson (20-22) **Vice-President**

Delores Thomas-Boland (19-21)

Department Senators

Megan Murphy (20-22) **Allied Health Absent**

Vicki Armstrong (19-21) **Business and Legal Studies**

Annette Fournet (19-21) **Communications and Fine Arts**

Julie Fournier (19-21) **Languages and Literature Absent**

Darrick Slaughter (20-22) **Natural Sciences Absent**

Cetrea Jimerson (20-22) **Nursing Absent**

Frank Daniels (19-21) **Mathematics, Parliamentarian**

Stewart White (19-21) **Technologies**

Darcy Sims (19-21) **Social and Behavioral Science**

Approval of Minutes

The body approved the minutes from the April, 2020 faculty senate meeting.

Reports from senate officers and senate committees

- A. Joyce Johnson: Report on regular SEC meeting with Kendrick Hooker, VPAA and Sindy Abadie, Special Assistant to VPAA

Joyce mentioned several issues were addressed in that meeting:

Pay delays for online courses faculty created in May

Complaints about micromanagement by Teaching Academy

Questions about “Best Practices,” promulgated by the Teaching Academy, a general sense that their “best practices” are sometimes little more than practices the Teaching Academy wishes to impose.

Joyce noted that Dr. Hooker wants faculty to express these frustrations, including deans in our complaints. He agreed, too, that the Teaching Academy should be making recommendations but not dictating course content.

The SEC also discussed concerns expressed to Dr. Hooker that Fall Break and Spring Break seem to have been cancelled, resulting in faculty losing leave days. Hooker responded that, with many of us teaching polysynchronous 13-week terms rather than the usual 15 weeks, faculty really did have some extra time off. He noted, too, that faculty teaching asynchronous classes could, if they wished, schedule time off.

The SEC expressed to Dr. Hooker a persistent concern that faculty should not feel pressure, either overt or implied, to participate in meetings and other college activities other than during days during which we are under contract.

Hooker regretted that certain promotional programs the college had created, like allowing students the opportunity to take two classes and get one class free, did not help as much as hoped to correct serious enrollment shortfalls. Funds that had been set aside for that initiative will now be used to give financial assistance to help some students who were purged from their classes.

The SEC expressed concern about the integrity of online testing and the difficulty of ensuring that students do not cheat. Hooker replied that funding for “Honor Lock,” a program designed to curtail cheating on tests, has not yet been secured, but that there is a movement afoot trying to make funds available for this

Special Guest: Kendrick Hooker, VPAA, answers questions and hears concerns about topics such as enrollment, Distance Education, and the Teaching Academy

The Senate welcomed Dr. Hooker, who had a good bit of information to share. A few highlights follow:

Dr. Hooker shared Southwest enrollment numbers, as of the day of our meeting: Headcount down 23.97% since Fall 2019. FTE down 24.26%. We will have an approximately 10 million dollar shortfall. We need to create a new budget and submit, to TBR, a 51 million dollar budget rather than a 61 million dollar budget. Our losses have been much stronger than sister institutions in Tennessee.

Hooker gave details on what the college has done, and what possibilities remain on the table for money saving:

There are 39 open positions; 28 of them have been frozen or are about to be. Savings, 1.3-1.4 million dollars.

Approximately 5.3 million dollars in savings needs to come from Academic Affairs.

The possibility of voluntary retirements will be explored.

We will need to look at salary reductions. All areas of the college, including administration, would see such reductions.

Faculty overloads cost the college between 2.5 and 2.8 million dollars, and the college offers many overloads, with 89% of our faculty receiving them. This might be a problem with SACS, too. Reductions of overloads is a strong possibility.

We also have a significant amount of release time for faculty. Dr. Hooker thinks we need to standardize it, 3 hours available in humanities, 5 hours in science.

He stressed that the administration's priority is to implement cost savings without removing jobs. He did say, though, that layoffs and furloughs are, indeed possible.

Other possible areas of savings might include certain dues and subscriptions, software cost savings, and another idea being considered, asking everybody to work for one week with no pay.

Senators and other faculty asked questions of Dr. Hooker, about financial and other concerns, paraphrased here:

Q. Might there be reductions in the number of our many deans and assistant deans?

A. That is a possibility being considered.

Q. Will salary amount cuts be "across the board?"

A. We are thinking there will be larger reductions for people making over approximately \$100,000, smaller reductions for people making under approximately \$50,000.

Q. When will these changes go into effect?

A. Spring 2021, at the earliest.

Q. How about energy costs? Climate control of empty buildings, for instance?

A. Yes. We are mothballing about twenty buildings for a while.

Q. When will the information about early retirements or pay cuts be shared?

A. The plan will be publicized in October.

Q. Are there plans to halt promotions or tenure temporarily?

A. Dr. Hooker has made no recommendation to that effect, nor has he heard of such considerations.

Q. Why have some faculty members not received the full amount of money for which their recent promotions entitled them?

A. Dr. Neal is looking into this, as it is an immediate and “shocking” concern.

Q. What about the fact that faculty are often asked to take overloads and that it’s very difficult to find adjuncts for some positions?

A. If one item, like overload pay, is reduced there won’t be salary reductions. The administration is trying to minimize the effects on faculty compensation.

Q. Will the college be declaring financial exigency?

A. We do not know yet.

Q. What about the approval process for online courses, currently being spearheaded by the Teaching Academy? Will there be changes to that process, which is often confusing and unclear?

A. Yes. Distance Learning and the Teaching Academy are working on streamlining and clarifying that process, with the Teaching Academy doing most of the technical review.

We hope to have a few faculty members to work with Distance Learning and the Teaching Academy so that the process can be improved.

Other questions that Dr. Hooker said he is hearing and will be considering:

Q. What do we do if we are given an online class, created by a different faculty member, that does not meet an individual professor’s standards for professionalism?

Q. We are currently unable to clone classes ourselves, even though such technology exists. Why not?

Q. Why can we not have more than one master copy of a particular class?

Old Business

- A. Bill Summons: Revisiting questions about policies concerning the status (tenure track, term, and emergency hire) of faculty. Considering whether a new ad hoc committee should be convened.

Bill explained that we had a committee, headed by Matthew Palotti, investigating these policies and with the concern that we were not following TBR guidelines. Matthew left the college in the middle of this investigation, and Bill believes we need to reconvene the committee. The senate approved the formation of such a new committee, to be chaired by Joyce Johnson and called “Ad-Hoc Committee for the Equitable Implementation of Faculty Appointments and Conversions.” Joyce Johnson will chair, and the rest of the membership will consist of Thomas King, Frank Daniels, and Annie Sultana.

New Business

- A. Hannah Province asked about the Compensation committee’s status and progress. Bill suggested Hannah inquire about her questions with Human Resources, noting that three year compensation plans often work for a year, but that years two and three often go unimplemented.
- B. Victoria Gray asked that the senate hear her concerns about the assignment of faculty offices. She complained about having been moved to a smaller office, in what was supposed to be a temporary move, and then having learned that her reassignment was to be permanent. Dr. Hooker responded that he would like Victoria to put her complaints in writing, at which time he would carry on a fuller investigation.

Adjournment

Bill Summons adjourned the meeting at 5:21.

Respectfully Submitted,
Doug Branch
Faculty Senate Secretary