

College of Arts and Sciences
Faculty Council Meeting
Friday November 17th, 2023
2:00 – 4:00pm, Microsoft Teams

I. Call to Order

II. Approval of 10/27/2023 Meeting Minutes

The minutes of the last meeting was approved.

III. Committee Liaisons Update

a. Library Committee (Kissi)

The liaison made contact with the committee but has not heard from them yet; the liaison will CC Toru and contact the committee again.

b. Diversity Committee (Novoa)

The committee discussed next semester's event ('I Belong: USF Week'), the law that is expected to be mandated soon, and its impact on diversity in the curriculum.

c. Faculty Development Committee (Friedman)

The committee appointed Felipe as the committee chair and worked on the fall conference travel grant. The committee chair received the slides that the council chair shared.

d. Technology Committee (Corton)

The committee meets twice a semester, and the next meeting will be on December 1st.

e. Grievance (Cleveland-Roberts)

One board for academic integrity came to a conclusion, and a couple more are coming up. It has been a pretty light semester in terms of appeals that have actually gone to a board, although there has been regular reporting through the Canvas referral button.

Based on the feedback that the committee received, tracking student complaints was spotted as an issue. To resolve the tracking issue, the committee is planning to use a software called Maxient.

IV. Associate Dean Toru Shimizu

- Status of the Post-Tenure Promotion Process

The deadline for a self-report or application is the 20th. The Chairs' review will follow. The exact number of completions is not confirmed.

There was a concern about a checkbox right before faculty submit their self-report, which implies that the faculty accept the terms of the review and implicitly eliminates their right to fill a grievance. Adam Caskie, Director of the Office of Decision Support, confirms that the language has been changed. Nothing much will be changed in terms of what's recorded in the system – the system recorded only the date and time of submission and not whether a faculty member agreed to any terms. Therefore, the faculty member is not waiving any rights by clicking the checkbox so those who already submitted and checked the box don't need to worry. This is likely a result of migrating the Tenure and Promotion template. The intention was to ensure that the faculty acknowledges that the documents that have been provided are accurate.

V. Dean's Remarks

Dean Michael's remarks are embedded in the discussions in other sections.

VI. Council Goals (Collins)

○ Goal 1:

Developing a collaborative initiative that addresses both student and faculty needs regarding food security and mental health services. This initiative is an extension of our unfinished goal from the previous year. This project has the potential to be a joint effort involving both students and faculty.

Jennifer Friedman provided updates on existing initiatives, those related to food security, and she is actively involved in a group working towards food sovereignty. Jennifer Friedman will serve as a liaison between the faculty council and the ongoing efforts, facilitating communication and collaboration. Tangela volunteered as the co-lead for this project. The plan is to have a 1-page proposal with recommendations to the Dean by the end of the year.

○ Goal 2:

Meeting with the provost. Priorities for the topics must be set since we will have limited time (45 minutes) with the provost. Two or three major topics can be covered in the meeting, and other important topics will be submitted to the provost in written form. Sameer has sent out a poll with seven topics that we could discuss: tuition exchange program, faculty salaries, graduate student stipends, research infrastructure, PTR, DEI, and Florida legislation aside from DEI and PTR as topics that we could cover with the provost. Jennifer Collins asked Council to reply to the poll ASAP so we can get more results and viewpoints.

The TEP (Tuition Exchange Program) is one of them since it benefits USF in terms of recruitment and retention.

Salary was another topic that was discussed in the email correspondence last week. This issue is related to low morale with existing faculty who have been productive and helped USF get AAU status. This leads to the question of what USF will do for all of the existing faculty. Some faculty members are demoralized when new faculty come in at a similar or higher pay, and sometimes forced to have external jobs to make ends meet. Being told that it is being addressed but will take many years is not meeting living needs of our current faculty. The issues related to salary compression and inequity by gender/race/campuses were raised. This led to a discussion about extra budget and reprioritizing for existing faculty members who invested their lives in USF.

Following the salary issues, we discussed a call to action to create strategies – to raise more money, what admins plan are for fundraising and lobbying to the state. And then someone suggested we could provide case studies.

Another topic was about plans to offer competitive graduate stipends. Dean Michael shared that the provost has said in multiple settings that some of his goals for the university include growing research and enhancing graduate programs in terms of status and rankings. As such bringing up student stipends would be a good idea.

VII. Fall Assembly (Collins)

We will not take minutes for the Fall Assembly.

VIII. January Meeting (Provost attending)

This part is embedded in VI and IX.

IX. Faculty Concerns

○ Council Member Questions

Council shared concerns regarding 8.005 regulation. 266 was allegedly averted.

However, the legislature will have control of all the courses, because they will need to approve all of the gen ed courses, and if the university does not get its quota approved, the legislature will retain money from the university, which means that the university administration will be mandating and making changes to comply to the legislature so that the university is not compromised financially. This means that we have no academic freedom in terms of certain topics and in terms of gen ed.

All agreed that this is a horrifying development. Dr. Michael noted that Gerard Solis from the Office of the General Counsel has emphasized that, while we cannot “advocate” for particular ideas, we still can talk about the ideas. The university is going to have to clarify the difference and how we should finesse that in our courses.

All agreed that USF may be able to leverage AAU guidelines and put pressure on the BOG given the possibility of losing AAU status for USF and UF.

X. Adjourn