

College of Arts and Sciences  
Faculty Council Meeting  
Friday January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2024  
2:00 – 4:00pm, Microsoft Teams

**Present:** Allison Cleveland-Roberts; Jennifer Collins; Maria Corton; Jennifer Friedman; Colin Heydt; Meredith Johnson; Paul Kirchman; Edward Kissi; Ryan McCleary; Magali Michael; Prasant Mohapatra; Adriana Novoa; Mahuya Pal; Thomas Pluckhahn; Robert Porter; Tangela Serls; Toru Shimizu; Stephen Song; and Sameer Varma

**I. Call to Order**

**II. Approval of 11/17/2023 Meeting Minutes.** Moved to approve (Corton); Seconded (Novoa)

**III. Welcome and Questions to the Provost**

**a) Faculty Salaries**

*Questions for Provost Mohapatra (Varma):* What effort is USF taking to raise faculty salaries given inflation, salaries at peer and aspirational peer institutions, salary compression? Specifically, how much additional funds did USF request from the state to address this issue, and how much was allocated? How optimistic is USF in securing additional funds from the state? Are there other fundraising activities being considered, or are we relying entirely on our state legislators?

*Response:* Provost Mohapatra acknowledged awareness of the situation and the need to attract high quality faculty, especially on the smaller campuses. Noted dependence on state funding, as determined by Performance Based Funding, Preeminent status, and tuition and fees. Views addressing salary compression as the Deans' and Department Chairs' responsibility. Stated new faculty recruitment will remain the priority. Offered to investigate teaching loads and additional TA support to help faculty prioritize research. Collins requested a reprioritization to support existing faculty that earned USF AAU status.

**b) Graduate Stipends**

*Questions for Provost Mohapatra (Pal):* What, if any, efforts are currently underway to increase graduate student stipends? What are your suggestions for recruiting highly sought after doctoral students under these financial constraints? Pal contextualized these questions by presenting Dr. Tammy Allen's report on graduate students' financial stressors, including inflation, high cost of living in the Tampa Bay area, and stipends that have not kept pace with either. International students are especially vulnerable because they are unable to take on extra employment to supplement low stipends.

*Response:* Provost Mohapatra stated he is convinced of the need for higher graduate student stipends. Noted that individual departments determined stipends at his previous institution while USF seems to be more centralized in its allocations. Dean Michael clarified that the Union determines the lowest acceptable stipend. Added that there are no

additional funds available through CAS and some individual departments pay more by admitting fewer funded graduate students and/or supplementing with external grants. Provost Mohapatra stated that graduate student stipends are paid through grants and the allocation of those funds are determined by faculty. Johnson inquired about alternative funding sources for graduate students in disciplines with limited grant funding available. Novoa added that these graduate students supply a large proportion of SCH in return for some of the lowest stipends on campus. Provost Mohapatra committed to exploring this issue, considering how strategies employed at his former institution might be adapted for USF, and working with the Faculty Senate closely and seeking their support on this issue. Provost Mohapatra noted that it is essential for the deans to capture their colleges' needs and convey them. Asked Dean Michael to make a compelling, data-driven case for additional funding. Dean Michael added that the new Associate Dean for Graduate Studies will also advocate for these needs. Novoa and Varma requested that candidates for the ongoing search for Associate Dean for Graduate Studies have experience working with international students and that the search be broadened to welcome candidates with alternative administrative experience beyond department chair or graduate director.

c) **Tuition Exchange Program**

*Questions for Provost Mohapatra (Collins):* What steps has USF taken towards joining the Tuition Exchange Program (TEP)? Which steps will be taken? What is the feasibility of joining the TEP next academic year (2024-2025) so that participation may commence by 2025-2026? Collins provided an overview of the history of support for the program and ongoing talks with USF leadership and Human Resources.

*Response:* Provost Mohapatra listened with interest to the history of the TEP proposal which preceded his arrival. Agreed it may be a potentially rewarding program that may aid in faculty recruitment. Clarity is needed regarding if differences in tuition fees across universities may affect program's implementation.

**IV. Committee Liaisons Update**

- a. **Library Committee** (Kissi). No update.
- b. **Diversity Committee** (Novoa). Preparing for "I Belong: USF Week." Reported that DEI committee is working on response to rising antisemitism. Expressed concerns that this committee may not be able to continue operating in the face of new legislation. Serls added that committee members will be meeting with General Council next week.
- c. **Technology Committee** (Corton). No update.
- d. **Grievance Committee** (Cleveland-Roberts). Reported most grievances are resolved at lower levels. Working on: 1) implementing new platform for SOCAT record keeping and 2) developing guidance for faculty to support AI integration. All faculty may access Co-Pilot via Microsoft. Smaller group piloting enhanced elements.

**V. Spring Assembly/Social.** Collins proposed a virtual spring assembly due to higher attendance online historically. No objections. Date of spring assembly TBD at next Faculty Council meeting, possibly to be held on the same day as a faculty appreciation event that also celebrates Sr. Associate Dean Bob Potter's 19 years of service.

**VI. Associate Dean Toru Shimizu's Remarks.** Provided update on the implementation of the Post-Tenure Review process. Seventy-eight cases are now in the Dean's office under review. Dean's office will submit recommendations to Provost in February. Thirty-two Tenure and Promotion cases are awaiting review in the Provost's Office. Thirteen Mid-Tenure cases are being reviewed at the departmental level. Fifty-nine faculty searches are ongoing.

**VII. Faculty Concerns.** Kissi inquired if there were any prohibitions against recruiting faculty and students from "countries of concern." Dean Michael responded that while this may invite added layers of complication, recruiting is not prohibited.

**IX. Adjourn 4:03pm**