

Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes

August 6, 2020

Approved September 11, 2020

1. Call to Order

Chair Insenga called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Present:

Barbour, Barrett, Boumenir, Branyon (sub. Willox), Corley, DeWeese, Erben, Fuentes, Gault, Geyer, Graffius, Gupta, Hadley, Hill, Hodges, Ivory, Kellison, Kimbrell, Kniess, Lew Yan Voon, Ly, MacKinnon, McKendry-Smith, McLean, Nickell, Pashia, Pazzani, Rees, Self, Snipes, Sterling, Swift, Towhidi, Van Valen, Wadlington, and Wang (sub. Jara-Pazmino)

Absent:

Banford, Cheng, Elman, Faucette, Gordon, Green, Hansen, Koczkas, Kramer, Mbaye, Ogletree, Richter, Scullin, Volkert, and Wofford

3. Minutes

A) The April 17, 2020 meeting minutes were approved electronically on April 21, 2020.

4. New Business

A) Shared Governance in Faculty Senate

Chair Insenga began the meeting by thanking everyone for attending. She then shared sections of the Faculty Senate By-Laws outlined in Article IV of the UWG Policies and Procedures Manual, specifically the descriptions of the role of Senate Chair and purpose of the Faculty Senate. She then made a motion to affirm the essential role played by Faculty Senate, either through the Executive Committee, Senate committees, or the entire body, in participating as a full partner in shared governance at UWG. The motion passed.

After the motion passed there was some discussion regarding the clarification of the term shared governance, and a link to the faculty handbook was provided in the Google Meet chat window. It was noted that the term “shared governance” appeared three times in the Faculty Handbook, always in the trifecta of “shared governance, impartiality, and transparency.” Several asked for an official definition of shared governance, but it was pointed out by others

that the motion that passed affirmed the principles of shared governance rather than any specific document or definition.

Chair Insenga clarified further that shared governance was a joint effort and that this is also stated in our by-laws. She stated that the Faculty Senate worked primarily as an advisory body, tasked with curriculum matters through UPC and GPC, as well as updating and revising the Faculty Handbook, Statutes, and the Policies and Procedures Manual through committees like APC and Rules.

Chair Insenga thanked everyone who wrote and signed the letter, as it created the opportunity to have this discussion and she was glad to have this meeting. She then opened the floor for questions and comments at 1:25 p.m. They were asked and answered as follows:

Q: The reorganization has caused considerable angst and trauma among faculty and staff. For example, six chair positions were eliminated from the College of Science and Mathematics and now there is only one Chair over what was once a college, all for savings. The commenter requested to see a spreadsheet detailing the savings and a cost benefit analysis so that we can reconsider whether this was worth it. Furthermore, they asked, what is the budget for this current academic year, and when will it be shared with faculty? Where is the transparency in the spirit of shared governance?

A: Chair Insenga stated that she too felt this angst and loss, and, while she anticipated the reorganization, she still found it upsetting. She stated that there was an Advisory Ad-Hoc Committee being formed, which would serve as an on-call group for budget issues needing immediate attention. The Faculty Senate Budget Standing Committee was charged with working alongside campus administration in this endeavor. Chair Insenga stated that she felt that perhaps faculty believed that advocacy was lacking because there were no Senate meetings this Summer. She noted that the Senate does not generally meet in the Summer as the Senate body is unavailable.

Q: With regards to the restructuring, the second commenter requested a clear written definition and description of the policies and procedures used regarding recent hires, the roles and duties of each position, and term lengths, as these are permanent positions rather than interim positions. Furthermore, there has been no transparency or sufficient conversation with faculty and staff regarding these new appointments.

A: Chair Insenga stated that the President had the right to appoint Deans, and that Deans appointed Associate Deans and Department Chairs.

Follow-Up to the Original Question: This is not what is stated in the COSS by-laws.

A: Chair Insenga promised to look into it, and stated that she would check the Board of Regents Rules regarding the process for appointing Deans and those who followed. She noted that she thought that this would be a question for Dean Gagnon.

Statement: Dr. Franks clarified that the letter was not written by the AAUP. Instead, faculty came to the AAUP for support. Also, the letter was addressed to the Faculty Senate and not to the Senate Chair specifically.

Q: There are questions and concerns regarding what seems to be a breakdown of shared governance on campus. Still, it was noted, this meeting met many of the points that were requested in the letter. A meeting was requested and was being held with shared governance as the main agenda item, and substantive discussion occurred. Chair Insenga's first order of business was to call for approval of a motion that affirmed the essential role played by Faculty Senate in shared governance. It was then stated that, while authors and signers of the letter understood that certain decisions are in the hands of administrators, many felt that there were breakdowns in policies and procedures at UWG and that the Faculty Senate could have taken a role in advocating for faculty at UWG this summer. That said, the letter was not an attempt to claim more power for the Faculty Senate.

A: Chair Insenga disagreed that there was a void in advocacy, and noted the ways in which she has worked and advocated for faculty over the summer from weekly meetings held with campus administrators and the President himself to organizing and facilitating three Senate Forums on Dual Modality, Reopening Campus, and Budget and Restructuring. Furthermore, she created the Teacher's Academy as a means of aiding faculty in the implementation of dual modalities this fall. She then reiterated that the Senate body was unavailable this summer.

Statement: Several attendees requested an official definition of shared governance in Google Meet Chat and in the virtual discussion, and stated that the Faculty Senate needs to provide one according to Robert's Rules of Order.

A: Chair Insenga responded that it would take a large, broad conversation to consolidate the definitions of shared governance held by various campus entities and that Faculty Senate would work on creating an official definition this year. She added that this would start within one of the Faculty Senate's Standing Committees.

Q: With regards to the reorganization, it should be noted that the students are also affected and traumatized by the transition and restructuring of the colleges. Where was faculty governance during this reorganization? A lot of this reorganization affects curriculum, policy, etc. and it should have gone through Senate committees.

A: Chair Insenga stated that while she agreed that faculty should have been consulted, the President can reorganize how he sees fit according to the by-laws. Chair Insenga then noted that the reorganization may not be permanent, and she stated that she was told this by Front Campus.

Statement: In looking at shared governance within the UWG Policies and Procedures Manual, we should compare where shared governance has been upheld. For example, many processes were skipped during the reorganization with regards to creating new academic programs. All of these changes should have come through Senate as action items, and we need to create an itemized list of what has happened, what should have happened, and what will happen moving forward.

A: Chair Insenga responded that this is coming and that Senate has a lot to do this year.

Statement: Dr. Finck shared the following information in the Google Meet chat window:

First, our university has a chapter of United Campus Workers of Georgia, a statewide union, which offers campus workers (faculty & staff) another opportunity for advocacy. If you're interested in joining, please reach out to me at shannon.finck@gmail.com. There are several local petitions circulating, but I'd like to direct everyone's attention to the statewide petition regarding campus reopening: <https://www.change.org/p/the-georgia-board-of-regents-safer-and-more-equitable-higher-education-upon-return-to-campus>. We're a growing union chapter, and I hope you will consider joining. Those of you seeking more info about the union, the website is <http://www.ucwga.com>. (Contrary to popular belief, you cannot be fired for joining a union or union organizing, even in a R2W state, so if anyone is hesitating for that reason, please know that retaliation for union membership is not legal.)

Statement: Dr. Hodges felt that a correction was needed regarding some miss-shared information, and he spoke to this in the Google Meet Chat as well as in the virtual discussion. He stated that the Faculty Senate Budget Committee was on-call during the last budget crisis, and they held multiple meetings with less than 24-hour notice. As such, the Budget Committee had shared governance with the Administration on Budget Issues. Since re-organizations affect budgets, re-organization was discussed in advance. During Dr. Marrero's term as President, UWG increased staff and salary with almost no increase in students. He argued that shared governance is more than a discussion, and it involves listening to resolutions and recommendations; we need to be worthy of shared governance. Cuts are coming and we will

have to cut faculty and staff. If we are not willing to discuss that then we cannot say that we were ignored.

Statement: It was noted that Dr. Insenga ran for Senate Chair unopposed, as did Dr. Butler before her. She stepped up when no one else would take on this work, and this makes it look like we as a collective do not care. The by-laws state that there must be two nominees for Senate Chair, and we violated our own by-laws. More faculty need to run and participate in Faculty Senate.

Q: Can we request how it was that the School of Mass Communications came to be, and also how people were appointed in an official communication from Front Campus? Also, there has been no information sent regarding Senator responsibilities and roles, and it would be helpful to send that out.

A: Chair Insenga stated that there was a Handbook for Faculty Senate Standing Committee Chairs, and that she would share that upon request. She also stated that she would begin work on creating a handbook for faculty Senators as well.

Statement: Dr. Sethna spoke at length about the budget adjustments and cuts during his tenure as President. He stated that while it may not have been perfect and he could have done more, there was faculty input. He then spoke about the policies and procedures used during the reorganization of the College of Arts and Sciences into three separate colleges, noting that the process was done entirely by committee with representatives from all of the colleges involved with Dr. Lloyd serving as Chair of that committee. According to Dr. Sethna, the COAS ran that reorganization, and he stated that it was delayed for six months so that faculty would have more time for input. He noted that the years between 2009-2012 experienced the worst budget cuts.

Q: Will faculty have a say in the Strategic Plan unveiled by Dr. Kelly, and will there be shared governance in this process?

A: Chair Insenga stated that the Faculty Senate Institutional Planning Committee will respond.

After a final call for questions and comments, Chair Insenga expressed her thanks for this conversation and stated that she had taken notes throughout. She affirmed her hope that the university would be able to keep all of its programs and appreciated everyone's comments and questions.

5. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by

Colleen Vasconcellos

Executive Secretary, Faculty Senate