Faculty Senate Chair's Report

2024-02-02 Faculty Senate Meeting

Current and Ongoing Items:

Issues Facing Committees:

- APPC handled an unprecedented number of Academic Standing Committee hearings over the winter break. The hearings spanned over the course of 6.5 days. Special thanks to the co-chairs of that committee, Curtis Holland and Lisa Chin, for administering these hearings!

- TLRC interviewed a potential candidate from the staff to serve as part-time director of the new Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning. While they thank this individual, and found them to be a solid administrator, the committee was concerned about how much time they could dedicate to this role, and also interested to find someone with more teaching experience at Old Westbury. This caused the committee to re-visit their decision from last semester and open up a call for a faculty member to take on the role of Director of the Center for Excellence in Teaching in Learning. The faculty member would be given a reduced course load (2-2) in exchange for leading the CETL for the first 2 years of its existence. We are working on finalizing a job description for this position, but if you are interested in the position of director of CETL, please let Yogesh More, chair of TLRC, know.

Other issues:

- Campus + University Teaching Environment survey results have been made available to us. The President discussed the executive summary of the survey at his state of the university addressed. The EC has been going through the raw data and is hoping to create a consensus on campus about what the priorities for standing governance should be in light of this data. I have asked FRRC to discuss the possibility of holding a faculty forum on the results of the CUTE survey.

- Faculty Handbook: is still being iterated with the President. Just to remind everyone how this process unfolded. Last semester, FRRC decided that drafting the handbook was outside the charge of their committee. Instead, we built a process that starts in Academic Affairs and allows iterative drafts to be shared to the campus community for input from the President, EC, and the standing governance committees. (See the documents from the 2023-09-08 meeting.) The final handbook will be voted on as a resolution by the full faculty. The process was changed slightly with the President coming in at the beginning instead of the end. This has the advantage of making sure that whatever comes out of the process will be agreeable to the President, but it has the disadvantage of taking more time. I'd rather get this done right than get it done quickly.

To that end, myself and the EC are still iterating this with the President to make sure that whatever goes to the standing committees will be agreeable to faculty and able to garner support in the final vote. So stay tuned, because the draft will be circulated broadly soon.

- Presidential Committees: Working this week to appoint people to the new, updated Presidential Committee structure (Campus Life, Operational Excellence, Planning & Budget, and IT Governance and Advisory are the four Presidential Committees according to the new structure). If you served on a Presidential Committee in the past and would like to continue serving, please email andersonk@oldwestbury.edu.

- Provost Search: Dr. David Lanoue has been hired as the next Provost and Senior Vice President of SUNY Old Westbury, effective July 1, 2024. He will complete this academic year as provost at Southern Arkansas University, where he has worked as provost since 2016. Dorothy is having regular meetings with David, and soon, I am told, the EC will be invited to one of these meetings. We are hoping he can hit the ground running next year. Thanks to the provost search committee and to everyone who came to the provost forums last semester!

- Strategic Planning subcommittees should have submitted their goals and objectives to the SPAAR committee via google forms. SPAAR is meeting to plan a check-in event for strategic planning subcommittees. The Strategic Plan needs to be finished by the end of this semester.

- Student Conduct: Student Affairs is in the midst of issuing guidance to faculty and hearing administrators to help clarify the student conduct hearing process, the BAT forms, and the ways that instructors should respond to student suspensions in their classroom. By the time of the next full faculty meeting (i.e. February 16th), this guidance should be distributed, and we expect to hear from Student Affairs directly.

- JED Campus Task Force: Cris Notaro and Cris Tesoriero are leading Old Westbury's JED Campus Team. JED Campus is a signature program of The Jed Foundation (JED) designed to guide schools through a collaborative process of comprehensive systems, program and policy development with customized support to build upon existing student mental health, substance use and suicide prevention efforts. This week, the JED campus team distributed the "Healthy Minds Study" to students to help survey them about the campus mental health environment. Please encourage your students to participate in the Healthy Minds Study.

Vacancies:

- The **JED Campus team** looking for **2-3 faculty** to help improve our environment for student mental health. If you have any experience or interest in addressing concerns around student mental health, please contact me if you are interested in joining.

- We still have three vacancies on the **Student Conduct Committee**: 1 SAS and 2 At-Large

- **Call to service:** looking for faculty to serve on the Student Success & Growth Strategic Planning Subcommittee, and the Operational Excellence and Campus Life Presidential committees.

UFS Winter Plenary Report

On January 19-20, 2024, I attended the UFS winter plenary. Runi, our elected UFS senator, will be speaking more on this, but I wanted to provide an update on the reports on Chairperson of the SUNY Board of Trustees, Meryl Tisch, and the SUNY Chancellor, John King.

Both Tisch and King discussed the issues facing **distressed campuses** in the SUNY system. Tisch mentioned SUNY Downstate, Potsdam, and Fredonia in particular. Both Potsdam and Fredonia are in the midst of cutting programs, teaching out the students who are currently enrolled in them, and letting faculty either retire, relocate, or, in some cases, cutting both faculty and professional staff positions. Chancellor King outlined what he called the SUNY Downstate "transformation" plan, which involves relocating out of the current hospital site and into the private hospital across the street. In a report the following day, UUP President Fred Kowal said that this so-called "transformation" plan amounts to a closure of the facility. In light of these developments, I'll be calling for us to endorse the UFS **resolution to endorse to the Potsdam faculty senate resolution to freeze the financial stability plan.**

Chancellor King also reiterated the importance of making it clear that our campuses are not the place to share hateful speech, especially anti-semitic or Islamophobic speech, in light of the recent catastrophic events in Israel and historic Palestine. He reminded us that Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits race, color, or national origin discrimination, including harassment based on a person's shared ancestry or ethnic characteristics. To recognize the importance of this issue, I'll be calling for us to endorse the UFS **resolution to uphold Title VI.**

King mentioned other important initiatives, including the re-launching of the PRODIG program as PRODIG+, focusing on creating a pipeline to tenure track faculty positions, the SUNY Climate Corps internship programs, and the veterans enrollment and support internship program. He also discussed economic mobility as a priority of his, as well as the need to undertake campus-level "transformation" programs while minimizing the disruption to staff. In light of the importance of our professional staff and in recognition of the barriers for their professional advancement, I'll be calling for us to endorse the UFS **resolution on professional staff advancement.**