

Southern Connecticut State University
FACULTY SENATE

APPROVED MINUTES OF March 31, 2021

<https://inside.southernct.edu/faculty-senate/meetings>

The 13th Meeting of the Faculty Senate AY 2020-2021 was held on March 31, 2021, at 12:10 p.m. via WebEx.

Attendance

Dave Allen <i>Accounting</i> 13/13	Matthew Ouimet <i>Counseling</i> 13/13	Sandip Dutta <i>Finance</i> 9/13	Atul Kulkarni <i>Marketing</i> 13/13	Rex Gilliland <i>Philosophy</i> 13/13	Angela Lopez-Velasquez <i>Special Education</i> 9/13
William Farley <i>Anthropology</i> 12/13	Natalie Starling <i>Counseling & School Psychology</i> 13/13	Lawrence Brancazio <i>Health & Movement Sciences</i> 13/13	Joe Fields <i>Mathematics</i> 13/13	Binlin Wu <i>Physics</i> 13/13	Douglas Macur <i>Theatre</i> 13/13
Jeff Slomba <i>Art</i> 13/13	Beena Achhpal <i>Curriculum & Learning</i> 13/13	Robert Gregory <i>Health & Movement Sciences</i> 13/13	Klay Kruczek <i>Mathematics</i> 13/13	Jonathan O'Hara <i>Political Science</i> 3/4	Luke Eilderts <i>World Languages & Literatures</i> 13/13
Kevin Siedlecki <i>Athletics</i> 13/13	Maria Diamantis <i>Curriculum & Learning</i> 13/13	Troy Paddock <i>History</i> 12/13	Jonathan Irving <i>Music</i> 13/13	Michael Nizhnikov <i>Psychology</i> 10/13	
Sean Grace <i>Biology</i> 13/13	Dushmantha Jayawickreme <i>Earth Science</i> 13/13	Darcy Kern <i>History</i> 8/13	Frances Penny* <i>Nursing</i> 8/13	Kate Marsland <i>Psychology</i> 13/13	Deborah Weiss <i>Faculty Senate President</i> 12/13
Mina Park <i>Business Information Systems</i> 13/13	Sanja Grubacic <i>Economics</i> 13/13	Yan Liu <i>Information & Library Science</i> 11/13	Kelly Martinez <i>Nursing</i> 5/13	William Faraclas <i>Public Health</i> 12/13	Cindy Simoneau <i>Undergraduate Curriculum Forum</i> 13/13
Jeff Webb <i>Chemistry</i> 13/13	Peter Madonia <i>Educational Leadership</i> 11/13	Cindy Simoneau <i>Journalism</i> 13/13	Obiageli Okwuka* <i>Part-time Faculty</i> 10/13	Michael Dodge <i>Recreation, Tourism & Sport Management</i> 12/13	Meredith Sinclair <i>Undergraduate Curriculum Forum</i> 13/13
Barbara Cook <i>Communication Disorders</i> 13/13	Mike Shea <i>English</i> 13/13	Patrick Crowley <i>Library Services</i> 12/13	Mary Ellen Minichiello <i>Part-time Faculty</i> 10/13	Sebastian Perumbilly <i>Social Work</i> 13/13	Cynthia O'Sullivan <i>Graduate Council</i> 13/13
Derek Taylor <i>Communication, Media & Screen Studies</i> 13/13	Paul Petrie <i>English</i> 13/13	Jacqueline Toce <i>Library Services</i> 13/13	Stephanie Fischer <i>Part-time Faculty</i> 9/9	Stephen Monroe Tomczak <i>Social Work</i> 13/13	Zainab Seyal* <i>Student Government Association</i> 3/4
Alaa Sheta <i>Computer Science</i> 13/13	Matthew Miller <i>Environment, Geography & Marine Studies</i> 13/13	Carol Stewart <i>Management, International Business & Public Utilities</i> 10/13	Virginia Metaxas <i>Part-time Faculty</i> 8/9	Adam Pittman <i>Sociology</i> 11/13	Dr. Joe Bertolino* <i>SCSU President</i> 7/13
Guests:	R. Prezant C. Hlavac J. H. Kim	S. Bulmer T. Bennett J. Edstrom	T. Milburn		

*An asterisk denotes an absence. Overall attendance recorded below each member.

Faculty Senate President D. Weiss called the 13th meeting of the Faculty Senate to order at 12:10 p.m.

- I. Announcements
 - A. L. Eilderts: Faculty Senate Membership updates: Senators whose three-year term is ending at the end of the academic year should hold a department election and share results with FS secretary. Senators are also asked to transmit the number of full-time faculty, including emergency hires, in their department for AY 2021-2022.
- II. Minutes of the previous meeting held on March 17, 2021 were accepted as distributed.
<https://inside.southernct.edu/faculty-senate/meetings>
- III. Faculty Senate President's Report
<https://inside.southernct.edu/faculty-senate/meetings>
 - A. Faculty Senate Executive committee **moved to endorse** the Faculty Senate Statement on Anti-AAPI Violence, Racism, and Hate Crimes.
 - i. Vote tally
 - 1. Yes 42
 - 2. No0
 - ii. Motion to endorse the statement **approved unanimously**.
 - B. ACME Report: Concerned faculty are encouraged to write to the BOR and David Levinson (Interim-President CT State CC) directly. FS Executive committee will look into sending a communication on behalf of the Senate.
- IV. Unfinished Business
 - A. C. Simoneau **moved to approve** the Proposed Revisions to The Faculty Senate Bylaws for The Elections Committee.

Current language in the Bylaws (IX.D.2.)

All-University Committees are those that the Faculty Senate has established to perform specific ongoing tasks. The Faculty Senate shall determine the purpose of each All-University Committee, committee eligibility and length of term for its members. Faculty serving on All-University Committees shall be elected by the full-time faculty in elections administered by the Elections Committee. Elections for All-University Committee vacancies shall be held before the end of each spring semester. If necessary, special elections shall be administered by the Elections Committee to fill any vacancies that remain after the first election. School/College restrictions for All-University Committees shall be removed in special elections that are held after the first special election.

Approved revisions

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the fall semester, shall be administered by the Elections Committee to fill any vacancies that remain after the spring election. During the self-nomination period in the fall semester, any School/College-restricted vacancy shall be dual listed as the original School/ College-restricted vacancy and a one-year at-large vacancy (indicated with an *). If any member from the respective School/College self-nominates, only the nominee from the School/College shall be listed on the ballot, and the other nominees shall be notified that their name(s) will not be on the ballot. Otherwise, the at-large nominees shall be listed on the ballot and shall serve for one year.

- i. Vote tally
 - 1. Yes 42
 - 2. No0
- ii. Motion to **approve** revisions to the Faculty Senate Bylaws **approved unanimously**.

V. New Business

- A. C. Simoneau **moved to approve** the Resolution Regarding the Size of The Faculty Academic Strategic Plan Committee.
 - i. Vote tally
 - 1. Yes 45
 - 2. No1
 - ii. Motion to **approve** the resolution **approved**.
- B. M. Diamantis **moved to postpone** Resolution Regarding the Robert E. Jirsa Service Award Committee to the next full Faculty Senate meeting.
 - i. Motion **seconded**.
 - ii. Motion **approved** through universal consent.

VI. Unfinished Business (cont'd at 1:00 p.m.)

- A. P. Petrie presented Report from the Academic Policy Committee: Possibilities for Improving the P&T Process.

VII. Standing Committee Reports

- A. Student Policy Committee: K. Marsland shared that information for students on the P/F process has been distributed via email. Faculty should read the policy and procedures carefully. Please note: **the Faculty Advisor initiates the process** and the student completes the process. Deadline for completed submission is **May 9 at 11:59 p.m.** Should a student initiate more than one P/F contract under these guidelines, the Registrar's office will only honor the first request.

VIII. Adjournment

- A. Meeting adjourned at 2:00 p.m.

L. Eilderts
Secretary



FACULTY SENATE

**Faculty Senate Statement
on Anti-AAPI Violence, Racism, and Hate Crimes**

Institutions of higher education exist to seek truth and promote understanding based on knowledge. Given the commitment of Southern Connecticut State University to social justice and human rights, the SCSU Faculty Senate expresses its outrage at incidents of discrimination, harassment and violence against Asian, Asian American and Pacific Island (AAPI) peoples in this nation and the senseless murders of eight victims on 3-16-21 in Atlanta. We condemn in the strongest terms demeaning and dehumanizing hate speech and acts of emotional and physical violence towards any individual or group based on national origin or culture, whether on our campus or anywhere in society.

Further, the Faculty Senate affirms its unconditional support for and solidarity with our AAPI colleagues and students. In alignment with SCSU's "Policy Statement on Pluralism," the Faculty Senate denounces discrimination, hate speech, and other forms of violence against all members of our community and seeks to nurture a culture on our campus that advances human rights and social justice for everyone. We will continue to foster an ongoing dialogue at our University that promotes the common sense of humanity that we all value so dearly.

REPORT FROM THE ACADEMIC POLICY COMMITTEE: POSSIBILITIES FOR IMPROVING THE P&T PROCESS

Possibilities for Improving the P&T Process Report from the Academic Policy Committee, March 2021

1. Background:

The APC was charged by the Faculty Senate Executive Committee with investigating possibilities for simplifying the promotion and tenure process and reducing the size of P&T files and the time required of candidates and evaluators to assess them. The APC settled on focus groups as the best mode for soliciting opinions from a representative range of participants in the P&T process on a number of ideas and questions aimed at our charge. Focus groups were conducted in both semesters of AY 2019-2020 and in Fall 2020 using a uniform powerpoint that guided participants through the key ideas and questions. Seven focus groups were conducted, with representatives of the following groups: AAUP, DEC members, department chairs, recently hired faculty, newly tenured faculty, university P&T committee members, Provost and Deans.

2. Key findings:

Findings are organized according to the questions in the focus group powerpoint. They comprise a summary of areas of general (although not always unanimous) agreement among multiple participants across multiple focus groups. We have not attempted a comprehensive summary of all participants' comments.

a. Require a personal statement and/or introductory statement for each category of evaluation, and limit its page length.

- Size reduction is a good idea, but only if it preserves individual's right to self-presentation.
- Reasonable to limit, but length needs to be negotiated (not too short).
- Should be a philosophy and narrative, not just a list-style recap of info found in CV / CIF.
- Word limit would be useful—would force concision / better communication
- Content guidelines with clearer limits and definitions needed—lack thereof leads to “race to the top” (pressure to add more and more)
- Key lengths of statements to evaluation category weighting
- Word limits would lead to better dept-to-dept comparisons of candidate files

b. Limit file's inclusion of evidence to a specified number (2, 3, 4?) of the candidate's most representative achievements in each area of evaluation.

- Wide differences of opinion, within many and between some focus groups.
- A degree of agreement that a “highlights” strategy might be good *as a suggestion* but not as a hard limit.
- P&T committee most unanimous in wanting more documentation rather than less (complete articles, web links, proof that publications were peer reviewed, etc.).
- Other groups lean toward a “less is more” philosophy, based on trusting faculty to tell the truth in their CVs / CIFs.
- Kinds and numbers of evidence documentation should be keyed to importance and nature of each category of evaluation (e.g. more for Creative Activity; less for Service).

c. (Re)institute department guidelines specifying expected file documentation for each discipline.

- Yes: clarifies expectations for faculty.
- Problem: dept guidelines may conflict with Dean's or Provost's expectations.
- Success depends on guidelines not being overly prescriptive or limiting of candidate's self-presentation.
- Good to have, especially with respect to creative activity (what is considered creative activity varies widely between the disciplines).
- These could be beneficial to the P&T committee as they are not always familiar with discipline or department specific creative activity.
- Problematic for departments with internal divisions, lack of consensus. Need failsafe plan for dealing with such situations.
- Should include examples / sample guidelines for departments to emulate.
- Must be communicated to candidates from early in their SCSU careers and remain consistent (no retroactive application of new standards).
- Some complications need to be considered: subdisciplines within a dept; mismatches between different depts' expectations (quantification vs open-ended or qualitative measures); disagreements between depts' and dean's guidance and expectations; inherent subjectivity of process; dysfunctional DECs in some departments.

d. Create guidelines for expected content of DEC and department chairs' letters of evaluation

- Yes: clearer indication of what these letters should include, with models.
- Should be framed as suggestions and examples rather than prescriptions / requirements.
- Offer as floor, not ceiling; suggestive, not prescriptive (except to prohibit form letters).
- Frame as a means of empowering departments to define their own P&T expectations so that other actors in the process don't do it for them—requires culture shift in ways of thinking about P&T process in depts.
- DEC/Chair letters should address each category.
- DEC/Chairs should represent the candidates.

e. Provide training / oversight for DECs

- Generally, "yes" to training; "no" to oversight (primarily because it would be impractical).
- Problem: training sessions already exist, but those who need them most don't attend.

f. Revise and shorten (or combine) Senate's P&T Procedures document and P&T Guidelines documents

- Cannot be combined, because Senate document is an extension of the CBA while Guidelines have status of suggestions and examples rather than requirements.
- Guidelines in need of reconciliation with Senate document.

- Some feeling that Guidelines should not be controlled by P&T committee but by a body more representative of evaluators at all stages of the renewal, promotion, and tenure process.

g. What is the bare minimum of evidentiary documentation that each candidate's file should or must include?

Areas of general agreement:

- CIF and/or CV.
- Personal statements for all categories of evaluation.
- Items should be included in department guidelines, therefore discipline-specific.
- Reduce extensive piles of evidence; file should be "representative, not comprehensive."

Recurrent ideas:

- CV should replace CIF: redundant.
- 1 major exhibit per area of evaluation.
- Require course observations (not just student opinion surveys).
- Cite publications but don't include them.
- Want the candidate to have the best voice possible in the file.

Concerns:

- Fear that faculty would be negatively impacted by minimalist P&T option: faculty need opportunity to explain more fully, give examples, etc.
- Amount of evidence in file must ultimately remain in candidate's hands: contractual.
- Need discussion and agreement on the shared principles beneath and between the contract, the Senate procedures, and the P&T Comm recommendations.
- Fear that administration may want minimalist process in order to have leeway for subjective judgment.
- Speculation that P&T Comm wants more evidence in order to pursue objectivity—but more evidence doesn't eliminate subjectivity. Only a level playing field among all candidates is essential.

h. Other ideas: What works in our current system? What doesn't work? How could it be improved? (This is a list of the more unique, specific and actionable ideas suggested by individuals in various focus groups; it does not necessarily represent areas of widespread agreement among individuals or groups.)

- Add ability to add comments to a letter.
- P&T process needs to figure a better way to value non-traditional scholarship.
- Fear that P&T committee won't value the story a candidate has told about his/her work.

- One person said s/he would “trade some freedom for more certainty” about P&T standards (i.e. s/he’d accept a more limited and quantified delineation of “what counts” toward P&T), but majority said that clarifying the criteria needn’t be in conflict with faculty freedom to shape their own self-presentation in P&T files.
- Teaching evaluations (OIR bubble sheets) are problematic as measures of teaching effectiveness.
- Useful to have a better understanding of administration’s role in the process.
- Several participants defined P&T problems in terms of competing “cultures” of P&T in different departments and among different evaluators. P&T should be framed as constructive process that builds university community, not as competition. Need a greater institution-wide shared understanding of purposes and values of P&T process, not just procedures.
- Perceived bias toward quantitative measures of candidates’ achievements undervalues work in many disciplines whose value is not readily quantifiable.
- Files should include all DEC letters during the period of employment.
- Files should include “external letters” from faculty and scholars from the same discipline attesting to the impact the candidate has created for their professional discipline/field and society.
- Files should demonstrate evidence of individual’s professional growth.
- Files should emphasize what’s new from year to year; repeating the same things again and again doesn’t make sense.

3. Issues about which there was not consensus:

- How can the university develop a shared understanding of standards and values surrounding the P&T process?
- Should standards and criteria for promotion be different from those for tenure?
- Should standards and criteria for promotion from assistant to associate professor be different from those for promotion from associate to “full” professor?
- What can be done about widely variant departmental cultures surrounding renewal, promotion, and tenure?
- How can evaluators in the P&T process productively balance an ethos of faculty development, support, and trust with the legitimate interest in maintaining rigorous academic and professional standards of evaluation?

4. APC recommendations for P&T reform:

- a. In order to reduce file size (without instituting hard limits on page length, number of evidentiary items, etc.), provide more guidance on expected / accepted kinds and number of items of documentation for each evaluation category. Include that information in department guidelines and university P&T Guidelines document.
- b. (Re)institute, with Senate oversight, department guidelines specifying expected file documentation and standards / criteria for each discipline, including a 5-year review cycle.

- c. Create guidelines and models for expected content of DECs' and department chairs' letters of evaluation.
- d. Require and limit (by word length) candidate personal statements for the P&T file as a whole and for each area of evaluation.
- e. To allay concerns from candidates and P&T members about reduced file size, allow the P&T committee to request more information from a candidate when committee members have further questions (as DECs already may), within defined limits and procedures to be determined.
- f. Under Senate oversight, reconcile Senate P&T Procedures document with P&T Committee's Guidelines document to eliminate disagreements and confusing differences in emphasis.
- g. Do not take action on these recommendations unless and until current CBA negotiations are concluded and current or similar contractual provisions governing P&T process are reconfirmed.

PROPOSED REVISIONS TO THE FACULTY SENATE BYLAWS FOR THE ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

Here is the current language in the Bylaws (IX.D.2.):

“All-University Committees are those that the Faculty Senate has established to perform specific ongoing tasks. The Faculty Senate shall determine the purpose of each All-University Committee, committee eligibility and length of term for its members. Faculty serving on All-University Committees shall be elected by the full-time faculty in elections administered by the Elections Committee. Elections for All-University Committee vacancies shall be held before the end of each spring semester. If necessary, special elections shall be administered by the Elections Committee to fill any vacancies that remain after the first election. School/College restrictions for All-University Committees shall be removed in special elections that are held after the first special election.”

Here is proposed language:

“All-University Committees are those that the Faculty Senate has established to perform specific ongoing tasks. The Faculty Senate shall determine the purpose of each All-University Committee, committee eligibility and length of term for its members. Faculty serving on All-University Committees shall be elected by the full-time faculty in elections administered by the Elections Committee. Elections for All-University Committee vacancies shall be held before the end of each spring semester. A follow-up election, in the fall semester, shall be administered by the Elections Committee to fill any vacancies that remain after the spring election. During the self-nomination period in the fall semester, any School/College-restricted vacancy shall be dual listed as the original School/ College-restricted vacancy and a one-year at-large vacancy (indicated with an *). If any member from the respective School/College self-nominates, only the nominee from the School/College shall be listed on the ballot, and the other nominees shall be notified that their name(s) will not be on the ballot. Otherwise, the at-large nominees shall be listed on the ballot and shall serve for one year.”

**SOUTHERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY FACULTY
SENATE**

RESOLUTION REGARDING THE SIZE OF THE FACULTY ACADEMIC STRATEGIC PLAN
COMMITTEE

Whereas, Southern Connecticut State University (SCSU) exists for the primary purpose of furthering academic excellence;

Whereas, The SCSU Faculty Senate is the official representative body of the Academic Faculty;

Whereas, Within the context of shared governance faculty participation furthers such excellence;

Whereas, The Faculty Senate is charged with maintaining and filling All-University committees; and

Whereas, The Faculty Senate strives to maintain efficient All-University committees; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Faculty Academic Strategic Plan Committee's membership be reduced from (4) elected faculty delegates from each school/college to three (3) elected faculty delegates from each school/college; be it further

Resolved, That the Faculty Senate Elections Committee shall develop a mechanism for dealing with expiring terms on the committee that arise; affected SCSU documents shall be revised to conform to the new committee structure.