SCSU Faculty Senate President's Report – October 2, 2024, meeting

1) Announcements –

a. A reminder for all faculty about grade appeals. Please see the email announcement on 9/25. A copy is provided below:

This is a joint message from Faculty Senate, SCSU-AAUP, and Academic Affairs.

Please note that there exist two available options for addressing student grade appeals.

1. The Faculty Senate Grade Appeal Procedure & Form
2. Article 4.2.2.2 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA)

It is critical and contractually necessary that ALL grade appeals for ALL students (undergraduate and graduate) follow the above procedures, which includes student initiation of the process.

Faculty initiation of a student's grade appeal, review of a student's grade appeal by a department committee, department-level hearings or meetings wherein a student is asked to appear before a department committee about the student's grade appeal, or the faculty sharing of grade appeal case details among department members other than the applicable instructor of record and department chairperson are not components of the above procedures and, if in practice, need immediate discontinuation.

These procedures are contractual and are designed to ensure privacy/confidentiality and strive to ensure a fair and unbiased process for both students and instructors of record. If there are opportunities to strengthen or add clarification to the procedures, please reach out to Faculty Senate President, Natalie Starling, starlingn1@southernct.edu, with feedback.

Please consider bookmarking the Faculty Senate webpage where the procedures are housed and regularly revisit the page to download the most recent version. The most recent version was very recently updated in Spring 2024. If you have downloaded an earlier version, please re-download the file. Please direct students with inquiries about the process to the Faculty Senate Grade Appeal Procedure & Form.

It is also recommended that faculty consider revisiting the Faculty Senate webpage at least annually at the beginning of each academic year to ensure that the files downloaded in the past are replaced and only the most recent documents are in use.

b. A reminder to senators - Academic Policy Committee (APC) has requested senators send feedback to co-chairs Maria Diamantis and Owen Biesel.

Each senator informally poll their departments to ask for opinions about departments interest in the creation of departmental P&T guidelines.

Each senator informally poll their departments to ask for opinions about what their needs are related to Artificial Intelligence (AI) that Faculty Senate could specifically address.

A reminder to senators to let APC know if textbook issues arise.

2) ***Service Opportunities & Faculty Senate Representation*** –Senators, please anticipate upcoming announcements from Elections about opportunities and elections to be held for the following:

   1. **Part-time Faculty Senator** election

   2. Liaison to the **Administrative Faculty Senate**

3) ***Fiscal Impacts / State Budget / University Budget*** – Please closely attend to messages from AAUP and SCSU-AAUP regarding upcoming events.

   Thank you to all who attended the SCSU-AAUP Assembly on 9/26!

   Thank you to those volunteers who will serve as Faculty Senate representatives for the **University Budget Committee** and **University Space Committee**:
   Nicholas Edgington edgingtonn1@southernct.edu
   Cindy Simoneau simoneauc1@southernct.edu
   Chris Petto pettoc1@southernct.edu
   Thank you, President Smith and Mark Rozewski for the committee invitations.

   A reminder that the Finance Committee continues to gather senators'/faculty perspectives and suggestions regarding budgetary issues. Please reach out to Cindy Simoneau, FS Treasurer/Finance Committee chair.

4) ***Technology – Navigate Issues*** – UCF representatives reported to the UCF chairperson concerns about access and disclosure of personal information in Navigate. Thank you to those faculty members who brought this to faculty leaders' attention. The matter of home addresses being displayed in Navigate is resolved. The Student Policy Committee (SPC) will connect with Academic Advising regarding users' level of access and student status categories.

5) ***Technology – Faculty Evaluation*** – SCSU-AAUP, Academic Affairs, Human Resources, the new Faculty Coordinator for Interfolio, and I engaged in conversations since Summer 2023. Finalization of the plans for AY 24-25 were announced via email to all faculty on 9/25. Below is a copy of the announcement. We expect our Faculty Coordinator for Interfolio, Klay Kruczek, to join our 10/23 meeting for Q & A.

   On behalf of Academic Affairs, the Faculty Senate, Human Resources, and SCSU-AAUP, we are reaching out to provide an update on the implementation of Interfolio for our faculty evaluations. A team of us has been meeting with Interfolio since late spring when the contract was signed; although all faculty Interfolio accounts have been created, the Interfolio faculty evaluation system is not yet fully functional.

   Therefore, we have jointly determined that all Evaluations this Academic Year will continue in Blackboard, except the First-Year renewals for new faculty who started in Fall 2024. New faculty whose first-year evaluations will occur in Interfolio this Academic Year will receive an email notification from Klay Kruczek confirming that their evaluations will occur in Interfolio.

   The following evaluations will occur in **Blackboard**:

   - First-Year renewals for candidates with January (Spring) hire dates.
   - Second-Year or later renewals for all hire dates.
   - Evaluation of Coaches (all seasons).
   - All Promotion evaluations.
   - All Tenure evaluations.

- All Professional Assessment evaluations.

The following evaluations with will occur in **Interfolio**:

- First-Year renewals for candidates with August (Fall) hire dates.

In addition, two Interfolio representatives will be on campus on Oct. 17-18th to finalize our set up and to offer in-person trainings. Sign-ups for those meetings will be sent out in the coming weeks.

We appreciate your patience and understanding.

If you have any questions regarding the digital evaluation process, please reach out to Klay Kruczek, kruczekk3@southernct.edu.

If due dates in any evaluation process have been missed please *immediately* send an email message to Klay Kruczek (kruczekk3@southernct.edu), Kari Swanson (swansonk8@southernct.edu), Linda Cunningham (cunninghaml1000@southernct.edu), Natalie Starling (starlingn1@southernct.edu), and Maryanne Boyen (boyenm1@southernct.edu).

6) *NCHEMS Meetings 9/18* – A number of faculty leaders and other stakeholders met with representatives from NCHEMS on 9/18 across two meeting times. Below is a combination of my notes from the meeting I attended as well as notes from other attendees.

Follow-up discussion with NCHEMS on CSCU Study commissioned by OPM

NCHEMS started with overview of some of information that they gathered during their process. Comments from attendee(s) reflected to NCHEMS belief that OPM does not have a good understanding what public ed is and how it's supported/should be supported by the state (i.e., purpose of publicly supported education).

NCHEMS described the "Big Hairy Problem" from their perspective (i.e., what are the issues NCHEMS needs to address in the report?):
At state level,
- Perception that there is no strategic plan or clear, widely accepted goal about what the state is trying to get out of public ed (i.e., lack of strategy) and low understanding of the needs of public ed students in the state.
- Funding – perception of low understanding of what the institutions need to execute their mission, i.e., what does it take for each institution to meet the needs of their study body?
- Perception of the state failing to fully understand it's impact on the institutions financially
- Perception of a very underdeveloped state policy on dual enrollment (especially with CT State) and how it can have a clear pathway from CT State to State Universities. UCONN has market corned on dual enrollment.
- Physical space – for some institutions, use of physical space has changed since pandemic. There are some challenges with this – state holds the title on these properties – do these properties meet the current needs of the institutions? Perception of a need to protect these assets.
System Level variables – perception of missing state level policy coordination.
- Perception of a lack of coordination between regents and state CSCU – a challenge to the development of a strategic plan (including UCONN) (Nobody is "looking at all of the tress in the orchard")
- Perception of lack of clarity about what system is supposed to do (role) vs. institutions
- Perception of missing accountability (in some cases)
- Perception of misalignment re: staffing with current needs (i.e., number, function, need)
- Perception of allocation of funds questions (amount and how calculated)
- Perception that the connection between components of system is not clear nor functioning well to meet student needs

Question re: unfunded mandates & comment that we cannot have unfunded mandates and the expectation to be successful (related to CT State). Response included explanation that NCHEMS sees this nationally – in some cases even worse – due to changes in needs of public education. This potentially being 10-year problem/adjustment was discussed along with a need for a planned and thoughtful transition (referenced CT State change here).

NCHEMS stated that it takes resources to transform. The impression is that NCHEMS is not going to say in their report if more money is needed or not, but NCHEMS may highlight points about how the money is allocated/spent and the need for thoughtful planning of those funds.

Attendees talked about needs of students being different than some groups that the state planned for/is planning for – with some comments about first gen and non-traditional learners and the need to create space for transformation and change. I specifically shared and emailed NCHEMS the links to highlight the enormous amount of existing data collected by the state for a large portion of our incoming students (for years to come) along with state efforts to meet high student needs and the achievement gap:https://portal.ct.gov/sde/interagency-council/interagency-council-for-ending-the-achievement-gap

The EDsight dashboard is particularly telling on the landing page: https://public-edsight.ct.gov/?language=en_US; More than half (54.8%) of public school students in CT are "high needs" defined by the state as a student with a disability, English Learner, or eligible for free or reduced price meals. I expressed that I would love to see these data triangulated with strategic plans for student needs in CT Higher Education. The data is already there. Comparison to private institution student populations and needs would also be invaluable.

Question re: Which states are doing it well? (allocation of funds to public universities) – NCHEMS responded that one trend is to calculate adequate amount of money to support system and for that information be used to inform budget requests.

Question re: What would it take to maintain this state asset? What would it take to meet student needs, etc.? NCHEMS responded that it will take all together to inform the approach to public ed. No state doing particularly well, but this is the direction it's going. Mentioned Illinois and a few others.

Question – do they think OPM will listen/hear what NCHEMS says? Comment that they have had some "aha" moments – the competition with UCONN branch campuses competing with CSCUs, etc. Also have heard that this isn't a Connecticut only issue. Reference was made to no one is going to like everything NCHEMS have to say. NCHEMS described that VT situation is still "on a knifes edge" but they have made some changes and have a plan in place now that has resulted in some real benefit. Missouri has a framework going through the legislature. Commented that they didn't recommend mergers (in reference to Pennsylvania situation).

7) *Senate Presidents Meetings* –At our September monthly meeting, senate presidents expressed concern about the anticipated report (in December) from NCHEMS and discussed our impressions from the 9/18 meetings. See our notes in the previous item.

8) *Meeting with Administrative Faculty Senate* –I met with AFS President Jordan Jones on 9/25 to coordinate a plan for the executive committees of these groups to meet again (similar to last year) to discuss mutual topics of importance. It was shared that Chancellor Cheng is also in contact with the Administrative Faculty Senate.

9) *Meeting with Chancellor Cheng* –An invitation has been extended to the Chancellor to join any of the remaining Faculty Senate meetings this semester. The Chancellor's office has also extended the Faculty Senate Executive Committee an invitation to meet with the Chancellor before the end of the fall semester, and with a goal of twice per semester going forward. Scheduling of these meetings is underway.

10) **Travel Funds Report for AY 24-25** – ==as of 9/11/24==. See table below. Budget Information below includes prior year carryover. "Encumbered" reflects those TA's processed and funds committed but does not include TA's that are in transit or pending in the Provost Office.

Index	Description	FY 2025 Budget	FY2025 Expenses	FY2025 Encumbrances	FY 2025 Balance	Index	Estimated FY24 Carryover
AUP769	AAUP Conf Wrkshp & Travel FT - 2025	$ 365,530.00	$ 3,370.00	$ 29,924.48	$ 332,235.52	AUP768	171,304.30
AUP772	AAUP Conf Wrkshp & Travel PT - 2025	40,614.00	-	2,800.00	37,814.00	AUP771	10,076.66
VPA017	Faculty CrActivity-RG	85,000.00	2,250.00	2,250.00	80,500.00	VPA017	-
VPA018	Faculty CrActivity-Travel	85,000.00	-	-	85,000.00	VPA018	-
Totals		**$ 576,144.00**	**$ 5,620.00**	**$ 34,974.48**	**$ 535,549.52**		**$ 181,380.96**

11) **Preparation for the 10/2/2024 meeting –**

a. Guests –

Newer Faculty Discussion Group – We will welcome the group facilitator, Patrick Crowley, to share information about this opportunity for faculty in their first five years of service at SCSU.

Academic Advising – We will welcome Dr. Meredith Sinclair of Academic Advising to share information about the work of Academic Advising and the related topics of Navigate, degree plans, discontinuation of academic maps, and other topics. Several current and upcoming topics related to advising and have been assigned to the Student Policy Committee.

b. **UCF Flow of Proposal** – Deliberation and voting on this item by the Faculty Senate is required for these updates that support the work of UCF. As shared by UCF, these are minor edits to the Flow of Proposals document. One change adds a mechanism for suspension and reinstatement of programs to the document to align with the BOR paperwork and the Graduate Council. Another change removes reference to DocuSign and Accelerated Pathways. UCF is transitioning away from DocuSign and removed UCF's involvement in accelerated pathways last year. These changes update the Flow of Proposals. ==Please review the packet for details==.

12) 2024-2025 – [Resolutions approved by Faculty Senate](#) – Updates on the resolutions and their status may be found on the FS website.