

SCSU Faculty Senate President's Report – October 14, 2020

For 10/14/20 meeting:

Discussion regarding Pass/Fail grading for fall 2020 – Please be familiar with our [current p/f policy](#) by following the link and clicking on Grade System as well as the [policy as it was revised for Spring 2020](#).) The FS Student Policy Committee has been charged with making recommendations regarding p/f for this semester (and possibly for the year). Our discussion today will help to inform the SPC regarding the sentiment of the departments. Some possible options are:

- a. Do nothing; leave the current policy in place
- b. Adopt the revised policy utilized for the spring
- c. Revise the current policy by adjusting any of the following parameters:
 - i. Extend the deadline
 - ii. Approve an exception to the deadline based upon extenuating circumstances
 - iii. Allow LEP courses to be taken p/f
 - iv. Allow course in the major to be taken p/f (departments would still be able to exempt their courses from this option)
 - v. Eliminate advisor and/or chair permission for p/f applications

Updates

1. **Student Survey** – Recently, it was discovered that a student survey had been sent out from Student Affairs that included questions that were felt to infringe upon teaching and evaluation of faculty performance (these portions of the survey appear in Appendix 1). No faculty input had been sought prior to sending out the survey. AAUP is preparing a grievance, as it is in violation of the CBA, while faculty on the EC and FLC are trying to work out a mutually-agreeable resolution to the issue with the administration in order to avoid filing the grievance.
2. **SAT/ACT Optional Policy** - Recently it came to the attention of the Executive Committee that unbeknownst to us, and while the Student Policy Committee was working on the issue of SAT/ACT optional admissions at the request of the Provost, a decision had been made over the summer by the administration to make a [permanent change to the policy](#). “Starting with undergraduate applicants for Spring 2021 and beyond, we’ll no longer require ACT or SAT scores for general admission or merit scholarships offered at the time of admission. We’ll look at your high school GPA instead.” In subsequent meetings and email exchanges, members of the EC and FLC expressed their disappointment and frustration at the abrogation of shared governance. The Provost expressed to us that he viewed admissions standards as being the purview of Enrollment Management and Admissions. Faculty leaders expressed that, to the contrary, admissions standards are of vital interest to faculty; the CBA Preamble states,

“Matters of concern to the Senate include (1) curriculum policy and curricular structure, (b) requirements for degrees and granting of degrees, (c) policies for recruitment, admission and retention of students, (d) academic policies relating to students, and (e) other matters of campus community concern.”

3. **The BOR Finance and Infrastructure meeting** took place last week. It is recommended that you watch the video of the meeting in order to understand where this committee stands on the current CSU financial situation <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IBICwFbEEAQ>. Key excerpts* may be found in Appendix 2.

4. **Travel Funds**

Available Faculty Travel Funds				
Fund	Starting Balance	Spent	Encumbered	Balance
FT “AAUP” Travel	\$491,173			
PT “AAUP” Travel	\$39,437			
Creative Activity				

2020-2021 Resolutions approved by Senate

Number	Date	Resolution regarding...	For	Disposition
F-2020-01	9/3/20	Revisions to Sabbatical Leave	Approval	Approved
F-2020-02	9/19/20	Indigenous Peoples’ Day	Approval	Approved
F-2020-03	9/19/20	Enrollment Caps for Online Courses	Approval	Disapproved
F-2020-04	10/5/20	Faculty Creative Activity Travel Funds	Approval	Approved

*with thanks to Dr. Lauren Doninger, Gateway Community College

Appendix 1

SCSU Student Feedback Survey Questions—AAUP Concerns re: Specific Questions

(Note: numbering of questions in this document is for clarity and may not align with numbering in the survey.)

- 1) Please fill in one row for each class you are taking this semester (leave remaining rows blank).

	3-letter Department code for class (e.g. NUR, BIO, CHE)	Select the teaching modality for this class	How would you rate the quality of this class so far this semester?	On average, how quickly does your instructor(s) for this class respond when you contact them?	Are there any other comments you would like to share about your experiences with this class?
Class 1	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Individual faculty members can be identified from this data and the questions are evaluative. Classroom management is the purview of the faculty. Quality is undefined and subjective. Responsiveness is subjective and dependent on specific factors relevant to the course. Responses to open-ended questions may reveal additional identifiable information.

- 2) Please rate how much you prefer each of the following teaching modalities...

Teaching modality is the purview of the faculty.

- 3) What percentage of your classes would you want taught using the following teaching modalities in the upcoming Spring semester (your total must equal 100%)?

Teaching modality is the purview of the faculty. Further this question does not deal with the nuances that should be addressed in the time of a pandemic.

- 4) Have you had any classes that have changed modalities at the last minute (e.g. an 'on- ground' course that got changed to online with less than a week before start of classes)?

We are concerned that this question is taken out of context of the circumstances that may have been involved in "last minute" changes to course modality. Additionally, these data can be gathered from other sources (Banner?) with a higher level of accuracy.

- 5) Please respond with how much you agree or disagree that the following statements accurately describe your experiences at Southern this semester:

- My assignments are graded and returned within one week
- My assignments are graded and returned with helpful feedback
- My instructors regularly engage with the class (via email, Webex, Teams, Blackboard, or other means)
- I am clear on the expectations of my classes for the semester
- I am clear on the assignments for my classes for the semester
- I have an adequate place to study and learn
- I feel confident in my ability to manage my time
- I am able to keep up with my assignments and course workload
- I have adequate technology or access to technology to fully participate in my courses

When/if the evaluative responses to this question are connected to the course prefix and modality response to the first question individual faculty members can be identified. Classroom management is the purview of the faculty. One-week turnaround time for grading and returning assignments is random. Questions about helpfulness of feedback and regularity of engagement are subjective.

- 6) When you had trouble contacting an instructor, what did you do?

- This has not been a problem for me
- I just waited until the next class to ask my question
- I contacted the Department Chair
- I contacted the Dean or Associate Dean
- Other

This is a leading question. The question is not *if* it is *when*. It assumes a problem

Appendix 2

Excerpts from the Board of Regents Finance and Infrastructure Committee Meeting, October 7, 2020

“And I’m still ready, willing, and able to sit at a table with anybody to try to reach some concessions so that we can put our institutions in a greater financial position.”

Mark Ojakian

“And I will just emphasize, before I turn it over to Ben, that abandoning the consolidation of the community colleges is not an option [T]hat is not an option that we are bringing to the table.”

Mark Ojakian

“We are resuming aggressive implementation of shared services We are transitioning those employees from college positions at the colleges into positions in the Shared Services organization on Friday of this week”

Ben Barnes

“We also provided over \$400,000 in faculty stipends that was necessary in order to maintain progress on the curriculum alignment work over the summer.”

Ben Barnes

“We are really taking great, making great strides in our ability to take the high-quality talent that we have within the CSCU family and making them, putting them into the positions in the One College.”

Ben Barnes

“On September 17, we instituted a hiring freeze across the entire system affecting the colleges, universities, and Charter Oak.”

Ben Barnes

“We have also proposed a \$500,000 reduction to reflect a reduction in discretionary release time provided to full-time faculty We’ve recommended that could be reduced by about two-thirds.”

Ben Barnes

“ . . . we are going to evaluate staff assignments at each campus and the System Office.”

Ben Barnes

“And again, to continue our review of non-instructional time approvals for full-time faculty to see if our experience in the spring of this year yields any lessons for how we can manage that more effectively and increase the amount of time our full-time faculty is spending on [inaudible] classrooms.”

Ben Barnes

“The System Office has, by the way, about \$22 million, a little over \$22 million, in reserves.”

Richard Balducci

“Why do we need part-time lecturers at the cost of \$35 million to our system? I think we ought to be able to cut that. I mean you watch the pennies and the dollars take care of themselves.”

Richard Balducci

“I mean I think you mentioned, or you and I mentioned, the ability to maybe do some privatization somewhere along the way. Not infringing on anything or anybody, but wherever we can to save dollars as we move down the road. I think it’s important. We have the HR Employee Survey, which says that we can eliminate positions and notice employees. But that’s, I think, for, what, 2022?”

Richard Balducci

“The shared service change has resulted in some staff being shifted into, the out of, the away from the campuses. It’s important to maintain access to student workers in order to ensure that, you know, they can have somebody there to, you know, take cash at the cashier window or whatever it is.”

Ben Barnes

“We can’t make meaningful change if we’re not looking at salaries.”

David Jimenez

“ . . . For current employees, things like salary cuts, furloughs. That is non-controversial. That’s a must-do.”

David Jimenez

“Whatever is protected under the collective bargaining agreement has to be put on the table.”

David Jimenez

“We have found that all contracts have room for these kinds of unprecedented times.”

David Jimenez

“I don’t want to know what’s feasible. I want to know what’s a stretch goal of cut at every institution It’s more than just what Central or Southern tells us they can do. Have we imposed on them stretch goals?”

David Jimenez

“ . . . the workforce planning part . . . should be pursued aggressively and full speed.”

David Jimenez

“ . . . several of the campuses . . . would love to find a way to reduce their adjunct costs by getting more course instruction out of their full-time faculty.”

Ben Barnes