

SCSU Faculty Senate President's Report – February 8, 2023, meeting

- 1) ***President Joe's announcement regarding Stockton University*** – Understandably, faculty have a range of perspectives and questions about the recent announcement of President Joe's application to Stockton. Many questions are appropriate to direct to our President. President Joe is scheduled to address the Faculty Senate at our 2/8 meeting; this is a good opportunity for Q & A. While we all await updates, faculty leaders acknowledge the potential for range of outcomes, which include a potential change in presidential leadership, and wish to assure faculty that we will continue to advocate for faculty needs and input. We are currently limited by the unknown, however, faculty leadership will continue to engage with administration as more information becomes available. In the interest of the faculty and our institution, rapport and relationships between the faculty and the administration are important variables to consider as we navigate next steps.
- 2) ***Service Opportunities & Faculty Senate Representation / Shared Governance*** On-going challenges with filling faculty service opportunities remain. Thank you to those who have volunteered to be a representative. The following seats remain:
 - two Senate representatives for the University Library Committee (ULC)
 - two Senate representatives for the Ad Hoc Committee on Continuing Education, Non-Credit, & Micro Credentialing (these seats are in addition to the APC chairs)

The Executive Committee is also considering a proposal for By-Laws changes that would allow for senators who serve in formal capacities that represent Senate (i.e., on the list below the attendance table on our agendas) to be excused from standing committee commitments. This proposal would need review and consideration by the Rules Committee as the committee assigned to on-going review of our By-Laws.

- 3) ***The Faculty Senate Executive Committee and Faculty Leadership Council (FLC) meetings with administration*** – As described in my previous report, this group met on 1/23/23 to continue discussions and monitoring of multiple topics. Follow-up occurred with the remaining topics of:
 - a. Requests for Clarifying Language in Communications– Our impression is that these requests were met with a positive response from administration and updates will be forthcoming. The FLC and EC requested revisions and clarifying language to the following:
 - i. *“Evaluations” vs. “Opinion” in email announcements about Student Opinion Surveys (SOSs)* – We requested that language in announcements and other communications about Student Opinion Surveys replace or omit the word “evaluation.” **This revised wording reflects terminology from the CBA about these instruments.** We noticed that the most recent SOSs announcements in December had some updated language, though there are a few places where the word “evaluation” still appears (e.g., “Students will have the opportunity to save the evaluation and return to it but once the evaluation has been submitted the student will no longer be able to make any changes”, the email address for questions reads “Please email us with any questions you have at: evaluation@southernct.edu”) and the follow up message to individual faculty members that indicates their results are available states “Student Opinion Survey (a.k.a. course evaluations).”

- ii. *Watermark/Digital Measures Faculty Success (WFS) components beyond credit load verification* – We receive questions throughout the year about whether faculty completion of the sections of Watermark/Digital Measures beyond the credit load verification is required. Our understanding is that this task is not a requirement, though we understand completion of the other sections may be highly desirable or otherwise helpful. We are particularly interested in future communications emphasizing that the task is not required and, if completed, how the information is used and how it is helpful to the entity collecting and using the information. This request is also made in support of tenure-track faculty who may have questions about tasks associated with the faculty evaluation process and may be eager to know which tasks are requirements. In this case, creation of candidate files in Blackboard and the prompt to also duplicate these efforts in Watermark/Digital Measures is a redundancy we are attempting to address with this request.

- b. ***Digital Files & Faculty Evaluation***– The potential for a different platform (other than Blackboard) for future evaluation cycles is under serious consideration. To my knowledge, no commitment to purchase another platform has yet been made. Trudy Milburn, HR, AAUP, the chairs of the P & T Committee, PPC, and the Technology Committee attended a demo of Interfolio on 2/6/23.
 - i. *What does Interfolio offer that Blackboard does not? What are some advantages?*
 1. Though a reasonable option at the time of our transition away from binders and paper files, Blackboard is not designed for a process like our faculty evaluation process. The “movement” of files in terms of access and availability for reviewers in carefully timed succession is not well supported by Blackboard and places high demands on time and communication among multiple parties (e.g., candidates, reviewers, Blackboard coordinator, Academic Affairs, AAUP, P & T Chairperson, FS President). Use of Blackboard also appears to increase the likelihood and impact of any human error. Interfolio offers a stronger workflow mechanism for the “movement” of candidate files throughout the evaluation process. This includes automation of notifications and access.
 2. Interfolio is in use for faculty evaluation processes at many institutions across the country. It is designed specifically for this purpose and templates can be customized to match our process. It is unclear if a perfect match is possible, although we were assured that some features could be adjusted. For example, Interfolio has a “locking” mechanism once a file is “submitted.” Our procedural documents specify that candidates are to remain in control of their files at all times, as such, any “locking” mechanism would need to be removed. We were assured by the Interfolio representatives that this would be feasible.
 - ii. *What are some disadvantages of Interfolio?*
 1. Adjustment and training time. Any new technology or approach requires training of all parties and thus imperfect implementation during the first evaluation cycle is probable. If Interfolio is selected, all will need time to learn and adjust to the new platform.
 2. Cost. Though Blackboard usage for faculty evaluation incurs additional costs, Interfolio representatives shared an estimation of \$30-40k annually based upon usage by our sibling institutions CCSU and ECSU.
 3. Interfolio, like Blackboard, is not a “drag and drop” platform. Materials must be uploaded. It is not clear if the ease of candidate arrangement of materials is similar to Blackboard, or if arranging materials in Interfolio would have additional steps for candidates.

- 4) ***Planning of a Meeting/Retreat of Faculty Leadership Executive Teams (FS/UCF/Grad Council/FLC)*** A meeting of faculty leaders is being planned to review governance documents and procedures to identify possible areas that would benefit from clarification and strengthening. AAUP will have representation at this meeting.
- 5) ***University Budget Committee meetings***—Meetings will continue this spring. President Joe is scheduled to address the Faculty Senate at our 2/8 meeting and may speak further to budget and fiscal issues. **The Finance Committee would like to gather senators’/faculty perspectives and suggestions to bring to future meetings. Please reach out to Cindy Simoneau, FS Treasurer/Finance Committee chair, simoneauc1@southernct.edu.**
- 6) ***Reassigned Time Committee***— This group was reviewing the allocation of reassigned time across the university. **Please reach out to Troy Paddock, the Faculty Senate representative to this committee, with input and questions, paddockt1@southernct.edu.**
- 7) ***Senate visits to departments***— This is an optional and open opportunity and will remain open for the academic year. Please email me and Luke with any questions and to schedule a visit.
- 8) ***Continuing Conversation about Interactions, Communication, Climate/Morale*** —As a planned continuation of this item from my previous President’s Reports (10/26/22 and 12/7/22) and our discussions at the 12/7 Faculty Senate meeting, the ombudspersons have been invited to join us again and are tentatively scheduled for our March 8th meeting. In addition to facilitating further discussion at Senate, we anticipate that there will be opportunities for Q & A about ombuds’ work at Southern.
- 9) ***Preparation for the 2/8/2023 meeting*** –
 - a. In the event I am called for jury duty, Maria Diamantis, Past President of the Faculty Senate, will chair the 2/8 meeting.
 - b. ***Resolution Regarding Inclusions to The Promotion and Tenure Procedures and Renewal Procedures (from Academic Policy)*** – **Please review the packet. These updates would directly impact all faculty in the Renewal, Promotion, and Tenure evaluation process.** Academic Policy has spent considerable time over multiple academic years inquiring with faculty and deliberating potential opportunities to streamline the faculty evaluation process as it pertains to candidate files and preparation of files. This Resolution is a result of those efforts and seeks to establish parameters to “remedy two perceived problems: file size and lack of clarity about what to include in the file.” The proposed updates are:
 - i. “Add professional statement with overview of overall file content of no more than 1000 words (approximately 4 double-spaced pages)”
 - ii. “Add professional statement for each section of file, as defined by the first four contractually defined categories of evaluation. (See article IV.C.3)). Each statement shall be limited to 1000 words (approximately 4 double-spaced pages)”
 - c. ***Resolution To Establish a Policy Providing Accommodations To English Language Learners (ELL)/Multilingual Learners (ML) (from Academic Policy)*** – **Please review the packet. This policy would directly impact all teaching faculty.** Academic Policy has engaged with multiple stakeholders to draft this proposed policy. The Resolution aims to “establish a student accommodation policy to provide extra time for ELL/ML students who must take timed quizzes, tests, and examinations in their courses” and “(t)hat the

procedures for this policy should follow the model of the current accommodation policy for students with disabilities”. This includes:

- i. “Administration of the policy through the Center for Academic Support and Accessibility Services (CASAS);
- ii. Identification of ELL/ML students via self-reporting and/or placement in ENG 119/120;
- iii. Notification of a student’s need for ELL/ML accommodation to each of their instructors by means of a letter from CASAS, authorized by the student;
- iv. Communication to instructors about accommodations is the responsibility of the student.”

d. *Guests* –

- **Newer Faculty Discussion Group Presentation-** Representatives will share the group’s background and current efforts. At the conclusion of the presentation, please expect a vote to determine whether Faculty Senate wishes to formally support this group (similar to voting in support of other entities or decisions on campus).
- The Senate proudly recognizes the **new Student Government Association (SGA) representative Pierce Kozlowski**. If able to join us at our 2/8 meeting, Pierce’s introduction will occur at the beginning of the meeting. Pierce is extended a recurring invitation as a guest to the Student Policy Committee. Thank you to SPC members for their welcoming of our SGA representatives.

10) On-going topics / “What’s Going on with....?”

This section of the President’s report is a repository of questions received by the Executive Committee in which information is still being gathered and on-going discussions are still being held. The Executive Committee welcomes additional questions and information from the university community.

1. **Early College** – What is the status of the program (e.g., fall enrollments, faculty involvement)? This item was addressed at our 1/25/23 meeting (see minutes) and will be removed going forward.

11) 2022-2023 – [Resolutions approved by Faculty Senate](#) – Updates on the resolutions and their status may be found on the FS website.