

**SCSU Faculty Senate President's Report – March 29, 2023, meeting**

- 1) ***Leadership Update & Transition*** – Our continued gratitude for President Joe's leadership and well wishes for his new position at Stockton. As our community prepares for a change in presidential leadership, President Joe is scheduled to speak at our March 29<sup>th</sup> meeting. This is an opportunity for Q & A.

Additionally, Robert DeMezzo, SUOAF SCSU Chapter President, Kari Swanson, SCSU-AAUP President, and I met with President Cheng and President Bertolino on 3/20 to share with administration our respective perspectives and input on behalf of our constituencies. It was a positive meeting and our input appeared welcomed.

In light of this transition period, I would like to offer my thoughts about my leadership approach moving forward. What I bring to the FS President position is a perspective of positive growth and I continue to believe positive growth is important and that Southern will continue to evolve and move forward. As we enter this new phase, my approach has shifted into change management. This approach prioritizes stability and predictability where possible during the current and the upcoming time periods, periods I view as being (naturally) more vulnerable to destabilization when major leadership roles are in flux. Our collective community, I believe, will benefit from thoughtfulness and discernment that considers how ideas and efforts are prioritized in light of internal pressures but also unknown variables and external pressures. In other words, I believe some priorities prior to this transition phase may no longer have the same level of priority, the pace of change in some areas may need to change, and some items, activities, and/or philosophies which may not have been emphasized or viewed as closely may now require increased consideration or a different approach altogether. I offer these thoughts to help provide transparency about my approach to reassure faculty and other stakeholders that such an approach is not individualized-- it is an approach intended to be irrespective of the persons involved in specific topics or themes; my focus is intended to be the topics and themes themselves and supporting our collective needs. "What are all the possible impacts this might have?" is a question I consider often. Many challenges and opportunities we navigate are the results and ripple effects from past decisions, some made many decades ago. It is my goal and hope that we engage in shared governance that will leave an overall positive legacy, even if imperfections are to be expected. I have observed no shortage of great ideas within our community, and I will continue to champion faculty efforts and support positive growth, now with the added lens of ensuring careful consideration is given to the potential short- and long-term impacts of changes that may occur during this transition period. I encourage all to consider a similar observant and thoughtful approach. I am and will continue to prioritize positive working relationships and diplomacy and very much look forward to building these relationships with the individual who becomes our Interim University President and the individual who becomes our next University President.

- 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) – The committee has shared "If we could have senate representatives join ULC together with elected members in

Spring 2023, it would be highly welcomed by our committee.”

- one (remaining) Senate representative for the Ad Hoc Committee on Continuing Education, Non-Credit, & Micro Credentialing

- 3) **Reminder: Encouragement for Faculty Attendance at the 2023 Undergraduate Commencement Ceremony** – Announcements continue to come forward about this year’s commencement ceremonies. Please consider attending and/or discuss with your departments/constituents to have representatives attend. I wish to emphasize the following message I received:

*As we move toward the completion of the Spring 2023 semester, we are excited to begin preparations for this year’s undergraduate commencement exercises. We hope you will consider joining us in celebrating our seniors’ success – success that is owing in large part to your hard work, commitment, and perseverance in seeing students across the finish line.*

*The time commitment is approximately four hours at the Total Mortgage Arena in Bridgeport. And as a special thank you, new this year will be a complementary social gathering for all faculty and staff attendees on-site at the conclusion of the event. The arena is about a 20-minute drive from campus, or you can get there by a university commencement shuttle or by riding Metro-North from Union Station.*

*For those faculty members who are new or do not own robes, the Commencement Committee has purchased 20 black doctoral robes that will be available for rental annually. If you are interested in learning more about robe rentals or attending, contact [Patrick Dilger](#).*

*Thanks in advance for your help in creating a memorable graduation day for the Class of '23!*

*Event: 2023 Undergraduate Commencement Ceremony*

*Date: May 19, 2023*

*Place: Total Mortgage Arena (formerly Webster Bank Arena), Bridgeport*

*Event Time of Arrival: 8:00 a.m. (Doors open at 8:15 a.m.)*

*Ceremony Start Time: 10:15 a.m.*

*Parking Location Option: Housatonic Community College Garage (Map is on [SCSU website](#)), Total Mortgage Arena Garage, Total Mortgage Arena Ground Lots*

- 4) **Meeting/Retreat of Faculty Leadership Executive Teams (FS/UCF/Grad Council/FLC)** – Faculty leaders met on 3/24 to discuss perspectives about governance documents and procedures to identify possible areas that would benefit from clarification and strengthening. A special thank you to Steve Larocco, University Ombudsperson, for facilitating the meeting. Faculty leaders look forward to moving forward and the Rules Committee will continue to discuss and deliberate next steps. My recommendation to the stakeholders at this meeting was that, as our community moves into a leadership transition period, unity with how the faculty collectively conducts its business with other groups will be increasingly important, as I outlined in Item #1 above.
- 5) **Reassigned Time Reductions & Cuts** – As described in my previous report, because of multiple faculty questions and concerns in late February, our outreach to the faculty body and to the Provost sought to gather an accounting and rationale about these recent specific reductions and cuts in Reassigned Time to facilitate conversation. We continue to receive faculty responses to our outreach. Faculty can share their experience via the following link and form: <https://forms.office.com/r/2ATQmRQRUe> Please also feel free to send a separate email or speak directly with me and/or AAUP President Kari Swanson ([swansonk8@southernct.edu](mailto:swansonk8@southernct.edu)).

The Executive Committee wishes to ensure senators are informed that the committee has been monitoring this matter alongside SCSU-AAUP. At present, we are awaiting additional data and information and have made a request to administration for this update. We believe the response to our request was made in good faith, and that while additional information from administration is not yet available, we expect this information is forthcoming. We also understand that some affected groups (e.g., RIJG and JST) have a scheduled meeting with administration on 3/31 to which the FS President and SCSU-AAUP President have also been invited to attend. We look forward to learning more about this matter and sharing once available.

Additionally, we understand the Provost has called upon the Reassigned Time Committee to reconvene and the committee met recently. [Troy Paddock](#), our Faculty Senate representative to this committee, will also be available during the March 29<sup>th</sup> meeting for questions.

- 6) ***State Budget / University Budget Committee meetings*** – Those who have been participating in the University Budget meetings throughout this academic year recently received an update on 3/22 from our Executive Vice President for Finance and Administration, Mark Rozewski. In sum, the original date of April 3<sup>rd</sup> as the budget plan deadline is no longer the case because the legislature is not expected to issue a counterproposal to the Governor's February budget message until April 20<sup>th</sup>. Convening the committee after April 20<sup>th</sup> will give us the opportunity to work with more facts that should be known by that time. Past practices have not resulted in a spending plan in-hand until mid to late May. The state also continues to struggle to make up for the loss of substantial amounts of COVID-related one-time funds to higher ed.

A recent summary of some things being considered and some coping strategies moving forward was also shared. As President Joe is scheduled to speak at our March 29<sup>th</sup> meeting, this may also be an opportunity to have an additional exchange and sharing of information. Please bring your questions to our meeting.

A reminder that the Finance Committee continues to gather senators'/faculty perspectives and suggestions. Please reach out to [Cindy Simoneau](#), FS Treasurer/Finance Committee chair.

- 7) ***Senate visits to departments*** – A reminder that this is an optional and open opportunity and will remain open for the academic year. These visits have been incredibly helpful to me at times when I'm engaged with university and CSU system leadership and needing to speak on behalf of the faculty. Please email me and Luke with any questions and to schedule a visit. Luke and I visited the following departments since the previous President's report and wish to thank the faculty for the opportunity:
1. Chemistry & Biochemistry – The department has faced the recent challenge of significant flooding in their physical spaces and remains hopeful and engaged in developments in this area.

8) ***Preparation for the 3/29/2023 meeting*** –

- a. ***Feedback Requested*** – As we are preparing to finalize Faculty Senate work for this semester, the Elections Committee and the Finance Committee are seeking input and feedback from senators about their items of business. The chairs of these committees will speak more to these items at our meeting. Please review their standing committee minutes in the packet and come prepared to weigh-in on these matters.

- b. *Resolution Regarding Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, And Accessibility (DEIA) In Renewal, Promotion, And Tenure Processes* – This Resolution is from the Personnel Policy Committee following discussions with multiple stakeholders throughout this academic year. In addition to connecting with the Provost, the “PPC solicited and heeded feedback regarding this resolution from interested and invested faculty bodies, including the Minority Recruitment and Retention Council, the DEI Advisory Council, the Promotion and Tenure Committee, the Racial and Intersectional Justice Group, and the Center for Educational and Assistive Technology.” This Resolution includes updates to both the Procedures Documents and Guidebooks that describe how candidates can present activities related to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA). Of additional note, this Resolution and its deliberation on the floor at the 3/29 will be the first formal acknowledgement that faculty engage in activities “considered invisible labor (non-credit bearing) or hidden work in (your) advising and teaching.” **Please review the packet for details.**
- c. *Guest Presentation: Anti-Bias Task Force* – We will be joined by guest(s) from this task force to hear information relevant to faculty about the work of this group.

**9) 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. Should Faculty Senate include statement(s) regarding Indigenous Peoples and land acknowledgement in Faculty Senate documents and meetings (see WCSU Senate as example)?**

- i. Following outreach to our DEI Office, this item is on hold until such time as the Executive Committee can learn more about what may be meaningful and appropriate. The topic has become more controversial as to whether having a land acknowledgement in fact creates more harm than good for indigenous communities. “[Moving Beyond Performative Land Acknowledgements](#)” is a podcast featuring an Indigenous scholar who shares her research on this topic. It provides a critical analysis to deepen our understanding of how land acknowledgements can create more harm than good. The Executive Committee seeks to learn more and invites input and education related to this item.

**10) 2022-2023 – [Resolutions approved by Faculty Senate](#) – Updates on the resolutions and their status may be found on the FS website.**