**LSUS FACULTY SENATE**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING**

**April 9, 2024**

**11:00 A.M.**

**Webster Room—University Center**

**I. CALL TO ORDER** 11:00 a.m. President Williams called the meeting to order.

**II. PRESENT:** Senator Widmeyer, Senator Shepherd, Senator Yeh, Senator Garcie, Senator Saleh, Senator Zaidi, Senator Cassandra Williams, Senator Kim, Senator Gifford, Senator Felice Williams, Senator White, Senator Mikaberidze. **ABSENT:** Senator Si Chen, Senator Zhao, Senator Noor,Senator Salvatore. A quorum was present.

**III.** **COMMENTS:**  President Williams opened the floor for comments from non-senators, who signed up to comment, under prescribed time limits. Per parliamentary procedure, only those present in the room may comment or vote. Sarah Mazur, Director of Resource Management and Discovery, briefed the senators on Louisiana HB 777, which proposes to ban public officials, including librarians and public libraries, from using public funds to engage in any transactions with the American Library Association (ALA), with potential criminal penalties for violations, including up to two years in prison. She emphasized that the ALA is a vital resource for libraries across Louisiana, offering training, publishing, and professional development services. Senator Widmeyer echoed her concerns, stressing the severe implications this bill could have on the Noel Memorial Library's ability to meet the needs of its students and faculty. Senators Gifford, Mikaberidze, and Williams then deliberated on potential responses to the bill and contingency plans should the legislation be enacted.

President Williams asked for a roll to be taken and asked senators to introduce themselves.

**IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Senator Gifford moved to approve. Motion seconded and approved.

**V. PRESIDENT’S REPORT:** President Williams reminded the senators that the graduation ceremony is scheduled for May 10 and encouraged the faculty to attend both morning and afternoon ceremonies. She announced that LSU President William F. Tate IV would address the Faculty Senate later in the meeting.

**V. ADMINISTRATORS’ REPORTS**

**Chancellor:** Dr. Robert Smith joined the Faculty Senate at the end of the meeting; he was accompanied by LSU President Tate, LSU Vice President Jason Droddy, and others. The Chancellor opened his remarks by calling upon the senators and faculty to attend the Spring Fling event, which will celebrate the enrollment record as LSUS has enrolled 10,000 students for the first time in its history. Dr. Smith updated the senators on the progress of LSUS's strategic plan, which has been in development for the past few months and is expected to be finalized this semester. He also highlighted ongoing renovation projects on campus and mentioned plans for future upgrades.

Following this, Dr. Smith introduced LSU President Tate, who detailed the core principles of the 'Scholarship First' framework. President Tate stressed the critical role of collaborative teamwork across all LSU campuses in addressing contemporary challenges through innovative solutions. LSU Vice President Droddy further expanded on the framework, advising that LSUS’s strategic plan should be detailed and play to its unique strengths. Echoing President Tate's comments, Droddy underscored the significance of collaboration within the campus community and spoke of "inter-family retention" of students aimed at fostering a supportive educational environment across the LSU system.

**Provost:**  Dr. Taylor updated the senators on President Tate's plans to review the preliminary draft of the Scholarship First strategic framework and to consider how LSUS can align with its objectives, emphasizing that healthcare research continues to be a priority; she urged the senators to engage actively by inquiring about the framework and LSUS’s potential role in it. Additionally, the Provost spoke about the forthcoming Outstanding Faculty Awards ceremony, encouraging faculty members to attend and support their colleagues. She also requested feedback on the recent changes to the Academic Awards Convocation ceremony.

**VI. NEW BUSINESS:** President Williams noted that the first business was the election of new Executive Committee members. However, she pointed out that several senators are due to complete their terms this summer and proposed deferring the election to allow the incoming senators an opportunity to participate in the committee. Senator Gifford moved to accept this proposal, which was seconded and subsequently approved.

President Williams addressed the need to revise the student evaluation forms to ensure the collection of valid and reliable data. She emphasized the importance of including precise language and relevant questions that would aid in evaluating and enhancing the professionalism and teaching practices of the faculty. Associate Provost Helen Wise provided a brief history of the development of assessment tools at LSUS, noting that the Senate had opted for print-only forms in 2014. She highlighted that the current assessment tools are outdated and have not been revised in over ten years. She pointed out the dual issues of choosing the right assessment tools and their correlation with faculty performance reviews.

Senators Gifford, Felice Williams, Provost Taylor, and Associate Provost Wise then discussed the complexities involved, such as concerns over privacy, anonymity, the reliability of the data, and response rates. They recognized the need to research best practices from other institutions.

**VII. CONTINUING BUSINESS**

No Continuing Business.

**VIII. OBSERVATIONS & CONCERNS**

President Williams inquired about current policies on faculty office hours. Provost Taylor noted that the faculty handbook, which regulates this matter, has been developed and updated by the faculty in recent years. She referred to Article 5.11 of the Handbook, which specifies that each full-time faculty member must post “a schedule showing a reasonable number of office hours (at least ten per week are required) when he or she will be available to students;” for online faculty, these are “virtual” office hours. Part-time faculty are expected to post office hours of 2 ½ hours for each three-hour credit course. The Handbook also specifies that “hours should be chosen to encourage students to take advantage of the opportunity, and faculty members should also stress their willingness to make special appointments for students who are unable to meet during posted office hours.”

Provost Taylor reminded the senators of the audio textbooks that are available at the university bookstore.

Associate Provost Wise announced to the senators that later this month, the university will begin a partnership with Watermark to transition to a new digital platform for Planning and Assessment, as well as Faculty Success credentials. Training sessions will be made available to department chairs and faculty members to facilitate a smooth adoption of the new system.

**IX. ADJOURNMENT:** A motion to adjourn the meeting was made and seconded. The motion was approved, and the meeting wasadjourned at 12:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Alexander Mikaberidze

Secretary