**LSUS FACULTY SENATE**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING**

**May 7, 2024**

**11:00 A.M.**

**Webster Room—University Center**

**I. CALL TO ORDER** 11:02 a.m. President Williams called the meeting to order.

**II. PRESENT:** Senator Widmeyer, Senator Si Chen, 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 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. No one signed up for comments.

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 attended Association of Louisiana Faculty Senates and shared two resolutions that ALFS approved at its meeting:

**Resolution 1:** “In the interest of providing the state of Louisiana with the best possible public education, ALFS hereby resolves that all four university systems in the state of Louisiana conduct honest, thorough, equitable, and well-advertised nation-wide searches for all open administrative and academic positions.

ALFS further resolves that all openings for administrative and academic positions be posted for a minimum of 60 days on public websites or in public print media (e.g. Linked In, Indeed, Higher Ed., The Chronicle).

ALFS further resolves that all open administrative positions include presidents, chancellors, vice-chancellors, provosts, and deans.

ALFS further resolves that all open academic positions include assistant professors, associate professors, and full professors.”

Senator Widmeyer raised concerns from library faculty regarding the sixty-day requirement for the hiring process, suggesting it could complicate and potentially delay the recruitment of new staff. President Williams acknowledged the concerns and agreed to forward these issues to the ALFS for further examination and potential action.

Chancellor Smith expressed agreement with the intent behind the resolution to streamline the hiring process. However, he cautioned about the practical challenges it might introduce, particularly in specialized hiring scenarios. He cited the example of hiring a police chief, noting that a local or regional search could be more effective and yield more viable candidates compared to a national search. Senator Gifford agreed, noting that LSUS may not want to keep the exact 60 day policy due to cost, and needing to move quickly to hire in specific positions.

**Resolution 2:** The Association of Louisiana Faculty Senates (ALFS) hereby resolves that search committees be responsible for selecting candidates for every administrative or similar leadership position on campuses statewide, that those search committees include faculty in their membership, that said faculty are selected by a designated faculty body, and that faculty membership amount to between 25% to 50 % of that search committee.

Senator Gifford raised questions about the procedures involved in nominating and selecting faculty members for search committees. President Williams indicated that the Faculty Senate would play a role in these decisions. Chancellor Smith highlighted a procedural concern, specifically the difficulty in meeting hiring needs during the summer period when the Faculty Senate is not in session; this could potentially delay the process when timely decisions are required. Discussion among the senators focused on the wording of Resolution #2, particularly the use of the term “administrative,” which was considered too broad. There was a consensus on the need to specify which positions the resolution would apply to, ensuring clarity and relevance. The necessity of filling administrative vacancies promptly was emphasized, alongside the need for an alternative route to facilitate decisions when the Faculty Senate is not able to meet in a timely manner.

**V. ADMINISTRATORS’ REPORTS**

**Chancellor:** Dr. Robert Smith highlighted an anticipated increase in summer and fall enrollments, describing the trend as "up sharply." The administration is currently conducting a review of faculty and staff salary scales; the aim is to benchmark LSUS's compensation packages against those of peer institutions to ensure competitiveness and fairness. Dr. Smith reported that LSUS is in the final stages of formulating its strategic plan, signaling a strong move toward long-term goals and initiatives. He emphasized the importance of faculty attendance at the upcoming graduation ceremonies scheduled for May 10, underscoring it as a key moment of community and support for graduating students. Plans are in place to commence beautification projects on campus this summer, which will enhance the aesthetic and functional appeal of the campus environment. The administration is exploring a reclassification of online tuition fees to facilitate the rolling of funds into the subsequent fiscal year, supporting more deliberate and structured growth. Dr. Smith concluded his report by expressing gratitude towards the faculty and staff for a successful first year of his tenure.

**Provost:** Dr. Taylor opened her remarks by expressing gratitude to the faculty for their dedication and hard work over the past year. She extended congratulations to the Department of Psychology for the approval of two new master's programs and a graduate certificate by the Board of Regents. Dr. Taylor reminded the deans that any new programs or certificates must be aligned with the institution's three-year strategic plan; she emphasized the importance of submitting proposals timely for inclusion in this plan. There is an ongoing administrative evaluation process and Dr. Taylor encouraged faculty members to complete their assessments promptly. She then discussed the Dean of Students’ concerns regarding the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in student work, particularly in relation to the Code of Honor violations. Dr. Taylor noted that students must be afforded due process and cannot be assigned failing grades based merely on suspicion of AI assistance. In a discussion with President Williams, Dr. Taylor explored the potential inclusion of a statement in course syllabi regarding the proper handling of AI-generated content.

**Facility Service:** Mr. Michael Bell, Director of Facility Service, provided an update on the significant damage sustained by the College of Business building due to recent storms, with particular emphasis on the extensive and complex repairs needed on the top floor. He highlighted ongoing challenges in negotiating claims with the insurance company, noting that these have led to considerable delays in the repair process. Senator Felice Williams inquired about the inspection and repair of damage within the building's walls. Mr. Bell outlined the necessary mitigation efforts, which include replacing the lower sections of the affected walls. In response to Senator Williams' follow-up question regarding the timeline, Mr. Bell stated that once insurance issues are resolved, the actual repair work would take approximately sixty days to complete. He emphasized that no repairs could commence until all insurance matters are settled. Senator Gifford raised a concern about furniture currently stored in hallways. Mr. Bell confirmed that the furniture must remain in place until the insurance claims are fully resolved.

**VI. NEW BUSINESS:** President Williams solicited nominations for the new Executive Committee. Senator Williams nominated Maggie Gifford for At Large seat; motion second and passed. President Williams nominated Felice Williams for the second At Large seat; motion second and passed. President Williams nominated Alexander Mikaberidze for the position of Secretary; motion second and passed. Senator Mikaberidze nominated Amin Saleh for Parliamentarian; motion second and passed. President Williams nominated Senator Zaidi for Vice President; motion second and passed. Senator Gifford nominated Cassandra Williams for President; motion second and passed.

**VII. CONTINUING BUSINESS:** President Williams revisited a previous discussion on the topic of student evaluations. She proposed that the questions used in these evaluations be reviewed and potentially reconfigured to better assess teaching effectiveness. Senator Garcie made a motion to forward the current student evaluation questions to the Instruction and Professional Development Committee for reconfiguration. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously by the present members.

**VIII. OBSERVATIONS & CONCERNS**

No observations/concerns.

**IX. ADJOURNMENT:** A motion to adjourn the meeting was made and seconded. The motion was approved, and the meeting wasadjourned at 11:39 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Alexander Mikaberidze

Secretary