

LSUS FACULTY SENATE
Minutes of the Meeting
Wednesday, November 9, 2022
11:00 a.m.
Cyber Collaboratory and Zoom

I. CALL TO ORDER 11:02 a.m.

II. PRESENT: Senator Coehorn, Senator Bible, Senator Garcie, Senator Gifford, Senator Kim, Senator McLemore, Senator Rubin, Senator Saleh, Senator Salvatore, Senator Shepherd, Senator Cassandra Williams, Senator Zaidi, Senator Zhao. **ABSENT:** Senator Mikaberidze, Senator White, Senator Felice Williams.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES—Senator Cassandra Williams moved to accept the minutes of the October 2022 meeting; Senator Gifford seconded. The minutes of the October 11 meeting were approved as read.

IV. PRESIDENT’S REPORT: Senator Garcie began by congratulating Noel Library for being named LOUIS Library of the Year. He reminded the senators of the career fair going on in the University Center and asked senators to share that information with their students. He also noted the Veterans Day event on the mall on Friday, November 11.

V. ADMINISTRATORS’ REPORTS

A. Chancellor Clark commented on the career fair and echoed President Garcie’s remarks about the library, noting that Dean Sherman would be making a presentation Friday on the transformation of the library. Chancellor Clark recounted speaking with Governor Edwards recently. Chancellor Clark reported that the governor complimented him on LSUS reaching beyond the borders of Louisiana with its online programs while serving primarily Caddo and Bossier parishes. Chancellor Clark told the governor about the present on-campus student body, which represents fifty parishes in Louisiana, thirty-four states, and forty-seven countries. He shared the same numbers with Higher Education Commissioner Kim Hunter Reed, who was also present. He reported that both were surprised by the face-to-face numbers. Chancellor Clark and the governor also spoke about what happened when LSU went to open admissions. One result was a realignment of students going different places. Chancellor Clark announced that someone would be hired to work specifically with international students, as they often need specialized assistance. He noted that occupancy in university apartments is at ninety-one percent, and student satisfaction with university housing was much higher than in the past.

Chancellor Clark suggested that the Faculty Senate get input from Kim Ramsey, who will be working with the search firm that will be vetting candidates for the Chancellor search in coordination with LSU. LSU is putting together a search team. LSUS faculty will have an opportunity to nominate or self-nominate for that. President Garcie asked how the search process was going. Chancellor Clark related his conversation with President Tate a few weeks ago. Chancellor Clark emphasized the need to work quickly to get the search going. President Tate agreed to use the firm, Isaacson Miller, that was used previously to speed up the process. The goal is to have a new chancellor named by July 1. Chancellor Clark said the search for a new CFO would take much longer as it was a somewhat different process, and qualified candidates are hard to get right now. They hope that person can be here by

October 1 of next year. Kim Ramsey will confer with her search committee counterpart at LSUHSC to benefit from their experience.

B. Provost—Provost Taylor notified the senators that Dr. Helen Wise’s husband passed away recently, so Provost Taylor has been trying to keep up with Dr. Wise’s duties as well as her own. The provost reported that registration for spring semester started Monday and the numbers look very good. Provost Taylor headed a delegation on a museum tour in South Louisiana to help the two LSU museums (Pioneer Heritage Center and Spring Street Museum). The group looked at what other museums are doing and sought help from some experts. Provost Taylor would like to involve the entire campus in the project they are working on: Dogwood Plantation, the site upon which LSU now sits. She would like to include students and faculty in taking a look at that history. Provost Taylor announced that enrollment is currently 8,721. She announced that the Staff Senate lunch would be on December 6. She indicated that she would put a graduation sign-up sheet in each department for faculty to sign up, because faculty are required to attend at least one graduation per year, and she hopes the sign-up sheet will help faculty members decide which graduation ceremony they need or want to attend.

VI. CONTINUING BUSINESS

A. Committee appointments procedure. President Garcie read the proposed wording submitted by Senator Bible for the faculty senate by-laws to provide guidance about how senate committee appointments should be conducted, as follows:

It is the responsibility for each College and the Library to monitor the Senate Committee appointments and vacancies and elect or appoint committee members as needed for the various Senate Committees. Appointments or elections (for the upcoming academic year) should take place in April or May as needed. The Senate Vice President is responsible for coordinating these efforts.

President Garcie asked for comments. There were none. He went on to explain the current situation and the thinking behind this proposal. Vice President Coehoorn said typically what he has done is reach out to the dean of a college where committee vacancies need to be filled. President Garcie expressed his support for having an election process. Vice President Coehoorn noted that department chairs have also been important in the process. Senator Bible explained that this was intended to be a clarifying procedure. He called for a vote. Under this proposal, the Vice President Coehoorn of the faculty senate does not run the elections but makes departments aware when there is a vacancy. Senator Bible’s proposal would give responsibility to the colleges to select committee members. Senator Gifford asked who would make the final decision if three people, representing the same college, all wanted to be on the same committee? Vice President Coehoorn said that it would be decided by an election within the college. Further discussion of the senate Vice President’s role ensued. President Garcie suggested striking the last sentence of Senator Bible’s wording concerning the policy and personnel committee. Senator Bible agreed. Vice President Coehoorn moved, and Senator Cassandra Williams seconded to put the proposal on the Faculty Council agenda.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Repeat/Delete policy: The provost asked Registrar Sherri Bohannon to clarify the repeat/delete policy. Registrar Bohannon said there was no documentation as to why it stopped. The policy was effective Summer 1990-Summer 1994, and then it ended. She does not know why it stopped. Under repeat/delete, only the final attempt at a class was calculated into the GPA. Now, all grades are calculated into the GPA. Vice President Coehoorn, for clarification, asked if a student repeated a class

and made a lower grade the second time, which grade would stand. Registrar Bohannon said the last attempt would be the grade that stands. Vice President Coehoorn asked about transcripts of transfer students that might have all attempts at a class listed. Registrar Bohannon said the last attempt would be the grade credited, and it would be indicated with an "R". Senator Shepherd asked how it would work if a student transferred to another school. Registrar Bohannon said it would depend on the policy of that other school. If a student transfers to LSUS with transcripts from multiple other schools, those GPAs go into our overall GPA. President Garcie asked about the policies of other schools. Registrar Bohannon referred to LSU's policy. LSU has "grade exclusion." They have a limited number of hours, about twelve. She gave an example of a student repeating a course for a better grade, and then going to the dean and requesting a "grade exclusion" on the first attempt. If the dean approves, the first grade is replaced with a letter "e." The course stays on the transcript but the grade is not calculated in the GPA. A legend on the transcript explains what the "e" means. It is all well-explained on the LSU website. Senator Cassandra Williams asked why we didn't just take the highest grade? The provost suggested the Admissions and Standards Committee look at the matter and make a recommendation. Chancellor Clark related a discussion on the subject when he was at LSUS in 1994. The consensus was that repeat/delete was good for first- and second-year students but not at upper level. A consensus could not be reached at that time. Discussion continued with several senators making different points and expressing their opinions. Registrar Bohannon said in her research the only school in Louisiana higher education using repeat/delete was Southern University. She recommended grade exclusion.

B. Faculty Research and Development Report. Committee Chairman Binshan Lin reported on the work of the Faculty Research and Development Committee for the fall semester. He presented a summary of the total amounts that the committee has been given to distribute and the total of \$476,500 distributed from 2016 through 2022, as well as a breakdown by year. He expressed regret that the committee could not award money to 100% of faculty members who applied. He assured the senators that the committee strives to be fair and transparent. All voting in the committee is by secret ballot. Chairman Lin presented a breakdown of research and development awards by colleges, 2019 through 2022. He explained proposal evaluation. The committee tries to have members evaluate proposals in their disciplines whenever possible. For example, committee members in the sciences evaluate proposals from faculty in the sciences, and so forth. The proposals are awarded in rank order. The criteria are kept as simple as possible. The committee does not create a very complicated rubric. Chairman Lin explained how the ranking process works. He emphasized that no one knows what other committee members vote. He encouraged faculty to write proposals so anyone can understand them. He asserted that the committee would like to award all the faculty members who submit proposals, but they have a limited budget and, thus, award the top fourteen ranked. He reiterated that the criteria are kept simple: completeness, quality, and impact. The same criteria have been applied every semester. He explained the process in detail and reminded senators that he archives all the information on Moodle.

VIII. OBSERVATIONS AND CONCERNS

A. Faculty Research and Development Grant Process: Senator Salvatore questioned the value of the criteria for making the awards. He asserted that he did not question the specific awards but the process for awarding them. He said that two faculty members had complained to him about the criteria being too stringent, specifically the requirement of strict consistency of type fonts. Senator Salvatore charged that this requirement was unreasonable. Chairman Lin responded that the guidelines were the committee's guidelines. He noted that examples of non-compliance of the guidelines were posted in red ink on Moodle. Senator Salvatore pointed out a punctuation error in one of the slides in Chairman Lin's presentation and asked, for example, if the entire presentation should be rejected because of it.

Chairman Lin expressed regret that such a mistake would disqualify a proposal. He encouraged those who were disqualified this semester to re-apply in the future.

Vice President Coehoorn commented that he has had proposals rejected for the same reason. He wasn't hurt by the fact that his proposal was not accepted. He explained that every grant he has ever submitted had very specific guidelines for how it must be submitted. He observed that if you decide to let a point like this go, then it could be referenced again and again. Grant applications have specific requirements, and every time he has submitted a grant, he abides by every single requirement because he knows the guidelines specifically state that the proposal will be rejected if he does not abide by them. Vice President Coehoorn stated that he would be in favor of rejecting a grant if it were not formatted correctly, because not doing so leads to "opening a can of worms." He emphasized that he has had a proposal rejected by the Research and Development Committee because of a similar infraction. He asserted that it is not a matter of there being consequence because of it; it is because of the precedent it sets.

Discussion among senate members ensued. One senator asked if the committee could provide feedback on rejected applications so that if something were wrong, the applicant would be aware of it and not repeat the same mistake. Chairman Lin said part of his job was to provide that information if it were requested. Some senators offered suggestions for avoiding such problems when writing proposals, such as creating a template with the correct font in advance. Chairman Lin said that if someone submitted an application several days before the deadline, and he caught a mistake, he would return it for correction, but most proposals are submitted at the last minute leaving no time for editing and resubmitting. Several faculty members agreed noting that this was their expectation of students. Director of Sponsored Research and Technology Transfer, Amanda Lewis, reminded faculty present that she will review applications for them but cautioned that if they waited to the last minute, she could not guarantee she would be able to do it in time.

Chairman Lin reminded the faculty that these are university grants not college grants. Moreover, the grants are not exclusively for research; they are "research *and* development." Chairman Lin observed that we are a teaching institution and must make these awards balanced between teaching and research endeavors. The committee is represented by members of all the colleges so that proposals in all disciplines can be fairly evaluated. He expressed regret that every applicant could not be awarded and urged those who were not to re-apply. He emphasized that the guidelines help make awards balanced for everyone.

President Garcie asked what the committee chair's response would be to anyone questioning the fitness of committee members to judge proposals. Chairman Lin responded that all faculty are not specialists in all disciplines. The faculty senate by-laws direct the make-up of the committee, not the committee or its chairperson. The committee's reason for making the guidelines simple is to make it easier for more people to apply. The warning that all applications must comply with the guidelines accompanies every call for proposals. Director Lewis said that she asked to be part of the process to help reduce the rejection rate based on problems with the proposal. She admitted that she didn't catch everything this time because proposals were coming in last-minute, so she was checking mainly for the major pieces. She observed that perhaps the feedback provided by the committee on unsuccessful proposals is not sufficiently detailed. She noted that grant evaluators for other grants she deals with will usually provide a rubric and how the proposal ranked based on those scores. She suggested that the committee might want to work toward that model and that additional feedback was what faculty members were looking for. Discussion ensued resulting in agreement that more detailed feedback could be provided and would be helpful.

Chancellor Clark suggested what was needed was more money. He urged the faculty senate to recommend increased funding to the provost for the budget process next spring. He also noted that the deans have discretionary money that could be used within colleges, but he acknowledged that we need to put more money into faculty research and development. Hopefully that can be looked at during the next budgeting process.

Minsun Kim asked for clarification about the amount to request when the need is less than \$5,000 but more than \$1,500. Director Lewis responded that she would assume the proposal would be for the real amount of the need. There were additional comments about the difficulty of distributing funds that could only cover half the requests submitted. The provost thanked Chairman Lin and his committee for the huge amount of work that they do every semester. President Garcie thanked the committee and acknowledged how hard they work based on his own experience serving on the Research and Development Committee. He offered a motion that the funding for Faculty Research and Development be increased however it could be increased. Senator Cassandra Williams seconded, and the motion was enthusiastically approved. President Garcie recalled that at one time all faculty members received a development stipend of \$1,000 per year and expressed the desire to have a similar model. The provost said that money was now allocated to the deans. Director Lewis said that she sometimes directed faculty, who contacted her with a need, to send a request to their department chair, and it will be sent to the dean. The provost took the motion as a recommendation to the Chancellor to increase the funding for Faculty Research and Development.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

President Garcie thanked all who sent questions to him. Even though they might not end up on the agenda, they provide issues he needs to investigate and find answers for. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura L. McLemore, Secretary