**LSUS FACULTY SENATE**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING**

**October 15, 2024**

**11:00 A.M.**

**Webster Room—University Center**

**I. CALL TO ORDER** 11:12 a.m. President Williams called the meeting to order.

**II. PRESENT:** Senator Gifford, Senator White, Senator Mikaberidze, Senator Felice Williams, Senator Siska, Senator Kim, Senator Shepherd, Senator Widmeyer, Senator Zhao, Senator Si Chen, Senator Yeh, Senator Saleh, Senator Cassandra Williams;  **Absent:** Senator Zaidi, Senator Noor. 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. 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 welcomed the faculty and recognized Senator Siska, who reminded the faculty of the upcoming elections and of the importance of registering and exercising the right to vote. He shared information on the early voting procedures and dates.

**V. ADMINISTRATORS’ REPORTS**

 **Chancellor:**  Dr. Robert Smith informed the faculty that LSU President Tate was continuing the Scholarship First tour and was scheduled to spend a day with the LSUS Bass Team. He also shared the news that LSUS enrollment numbers continue to rise and are expected to exceed 11,000 students this fall. A group of administrative officials recently attended a higher education conference in Pittsburgh, where they highlighted LSUS’s success in increasing enrollment and improving retention. It’s encouraging to see that “LSUS is being noticed.”

Dr. Smith also mentioned that LSUS’s Strategic Plan is nearing completion and will soon be shared with the campus community. He expressed gratitude to the faculty involved in preparing for the upcoming SACSCOC reaffirmation visit next spring. Discussions regarding the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), a comprehensive initiative to enhance student learning, are in progress.

Senator Gifford asked how faculty could assist the administration in preparing for the SACSCOC visit. The chancellor deferred to Provost Taylor, who explained that her office is currently working on the details and will seek faculty involvement and assistance. Senator Mikaberidze inquired about the LSU Board of Supervisors' recent decision to amend its bylaws, allowing the chairman to appoint a member to any search committee within the university system. Dr. Smith noted that he was aware of the change but stated that he does not anticipate it affecting faculty searches.

 **Provost:**  Dr. Taylor began her remarks by reminding the faculty of LSUS’s ongoing work on the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), which has been in progress for several years. She encouraged faculty members to participate in the upcoming QEP meetings. She also announced that the spring 2025 course schedule is now live and highlighted the “student-centric approach” used in planning the courses. Additionally, Dr. Taylor shared that the LPC has approved new faculty positions and course releases. She noted that the search for the new Dean of the College of Education is about to begin.

**VI. NEW BUSINESS:** President Williams recognized Dr. Heather Carpenter who presented recommendations, developed by Instruction and Professional Development Committee, for a new syllabus template. After a short discussion it was decided to discuss this matter in Observations/Concerns.

**VII. CONTINUING BUSINESS:** President Williams received a memo from the P&P Committee regarding proposed changes to Promotion and Tenure Policy 2.01.06, aimed at aligning LSUS policies with LSU Permanent Memorandum 69. The committee emphasized that LSUS policy must not conflict with LSU policy and the established oversight procedures governing campuses within the LSU system. The proposed changes clarify the schedule and review procedures. The P&P Committee also suggested revisions to Faculty Due Process Policy 2.19.02. Specifically, the last sentence of the final paragraph should be edited to state: “The LSUS Chancellor shall make his/her recommendation to the LSU President, whose decision is final.”

President Williams consulted on procedural matters with Parliamentarian Saleh on procedural matters, who noted that the proposed changes must ultimately be reviewed and approved by the administration.

Senator Siska raised concerns about aspects of the current Promotion and Tenure Policy, pointing out that it currently states the LSUS Chancellor makes “a formal decision,” which is considered “final.” Referring to previous issues with faculty promotions, he questioned whether the Chancellor can rescind this decision. Dr. Smith and Provost Taylor joined the discussion, acknowledging the ambiguity in the policy’s wording, especially since it conflicts with LSU Permanent Memorandum 69. The P&P Committee has also recognized this issue and suggested rephrasing it to “a formal decision.” Senators Siska, Gifford, and Mikaberidze discussed the different terms – “decision” and “recommendation” – employed on these documents and proposed that the policy should refer to the Chancellor’s “formal recommendation” instead of “decision,” since the LSU President ultimately makes the “final decision.” P&P Committee’s proposed changes to Faculty Due Process Policy 2.19.02 already refer to “recommendation to the LSU President.”

**VIII. OBSERVATIONS & CONCERNS:**

President Williams and Senator Gifford raised concerns about classes being canceled due to low enrollment and inquired about the threshold for making such decisions. Provost Taylor explained that the threshold has fluctuated in recent years, ranging from 10 students in the pre-COVID era to six during the pandemic. She clarified that this number should not be viewed as a strict rule but rather as a general guideline aimed at improving course offerings and scheduling across various disciplines. Senator Felice Williams asked what factors influence decision on cancelling a course. Provost Taylor responded that decisions are based on input from department chairs and college deans. She also reminded the faculty that the Board of Regents tracks enrollment and graduation rates for all programs, noting that some programs are struggling and at risk of being discontinued. Senator White weighed in on the discussion, expressing her appreciation for the provost’s efforts but suggesting that faculty should be more involved in course scheduling and cancellation decisions. She emphasized that faculty are more familiar with students' needs, and their feedback should be valued and considered. The provost agreed, stating that “more conversations are key” to making informed decisions. Senator Gifford inquired about the possibility of reduced pay for low-enrollment courses. Provost Taylor responded that such decisions would be based on multiple factors but emphasized that the administration does not wish to cut faculty pay. She assured that the administration will always strive to explore alternative solutions, such as course releases or summer assignments, to address the issue.

President Williams acknowledged Dean of Students Paula Atkins, who addressed the issue of dropping students from courses due to non-attendance. Senators discussed the current procedures for reporting non-attending students and considered a proposed change that would allow students to be dropped if they miss the first two weeks of lectures.

Senator White raised concerns on behalf of some faculty regarding the CAS Online Teaching Committee’s four "recommendations" from May 2022, which have now been included as eleven "requirements" in CAS's new administrative oversight checklist. This checklist, which departmental chairs must complete three times per semester, was implemented without consultation with the Faculty Senate. Senator White questioned how this decision was made and why the Faculty Senate was not involved in the process. President Williams requested that Senator White circulate the relevant documents so the Faculty Senate can address the issue at the next meeting.

President Williams asked the administration whether a PDF version of the university catalog would be available to the faculty. Chief Information Officer Scott Hardwick noted that the web version is already accessible online and encouraged the faculty to use it, highlighting its far superior functionality compared to a PDF.

President Williams invited Dr. Heather Carpenter to present the Instruction and Professional Development Committee’s recommendations on improvements to the syllabus template. Dr. Carpenter shared the committee's suggestions, sparking a discussion between her and President Williams about whether the revised syllabus template should be optional or mandatory for faculty. Provost Taylor offered a broader perspective, emphasizing how a well-structured syllabus can help students better navigate their courses. She encouraged circulating the updated syllabus among faculty and gathering their feedback at the next Faculty Council meeting. Dr. Carpenter also presented proposed changes to a course template on the Moodle platform. Senators Gifford and Felice Williams inquired about specific proposed changes, including the minimum number of office hours. The discussion centered on the current and proposed wording of office hours in the Faculty Handbook.

**IX. ADJOURNMENT:** A motion to adjourn the meeting was made and seconded. The motion was approved, and the meeting wasadjourned at 12:58 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Alexander Mikaberidze

Secretary