

East Georgia State College Faculty Senate

Meeting Minutes

February 2nd, 2024

9:00AM via Zoom

Meeting Facilitator: Breana Simmons, President

- I. Open Pre-meeting discussion
- II. Call to order (9:00am) – regular meeting
- III. Roll call: Senate members present: Breana Simmons, Laura Chambers, Christian Kraus, Carmine Palumbo, Christine Xie, and Natasha Goss; Daniel Mancill could be late.
- IV. Greeting of Visitors: Guests, Amelia Simmons, Ren Denton, Yelena White. Johnna Eaton came in late. Dr. Val Czerny and Dr. Catherine Whelan also entered the meeting late.
- V. Approval of minutes from November and Adoption of Agenda: Agenda for February meeting approved/ No minutes from November meeting.
- VI. Committee Reports
 - a. Academic Honesty Policy (AI revisions) AI revisions to policy were sent out, but sent too late to review before meeting. AI issues were researched extensively by the revision committee and included personal experiences with AI issues in the classroom. Questions about the revisions were invited. Natasha offered an experience where a student blasted her on her evaluation because she penalized the student for using AI. So, she was particularly grateful for the committee work and for the way the policy is now worded.
- VII. Open Issues: No open issues discussed
- VIII. New Business
 - a. New Courses for FinTech degree: Motion and second to approve FinTech courses were made. No opposition and the courses passed vote.
 - b. Revision of Faculty Evaluation policy: Motion and second to approve faculty evaluation policy were made. Some nuts and bolts issues were discussed. The various lists under student success were discussed with respect to the source for the lists. Dr. Whelan offered that the list was a combination of recommendations from the USG and recommendations from faculty as well. Discussion of assignment of contributions in areas that could be applied in other areas was had, and Dr. Whelan expressed that she

felt like contributions could apply in more than one area, depending on faculty intentions and dispensation. Motion passed after some discussion.

- c. Revision of the Annual Report Template: Motion and second to approve report template were made. Discussion was had. Christian presented a brief summary of a short faculty survey responses and Dr. Whelan addressed those concerns as best as possible, many issues which were USG mandates and not up for discussion. Breana offered that many faculty are concerned about how much weight/how student pass rates are going to be used during the evaluation. There are faculty members who teach courses which have student makeups that are more or less conducive to a high student success rate, which is not fair to faculty who teach courses with students who are less likely to be successful. Laura proposed the idea that faculty should be able to defend and/or appeal potential negative evaluation outcomes. Dr. Whelan offered that there were opportunities to comment on their evaluations, but not, necessarily, to have their evaluation outcomes changed. Natasha asked for clarification on the CV inclusion, wanting to know if their CV was supposed to be structured to align with the evaluation. Dr. Whelan clarified that there was no expectation that the CV align with the evaluation, just that it be a current CV. After extensive discussion, motion passed.
- d. Revision of the Faculty Annual Evaluation Rubric: Motion and second to approve rubric were made. Breana pointed out that the new rubric offers faculty the opportunity to respond to evaluation/scores in each particular area. Laura clarified her question from earlier related to evaluation scores—is there a way to argue and potentially have scores changed if a faculty member is not satisfied with their score/evaluation. Christine asked a question about a rubric to challenge a negative evaluation. Dr. Whelan offered that there was not and that the ideas behind the evaluation were for faculty to try to address the categories in ways that play to their strengths. Breana offered that there was a good bit of faculty concern about being evaluated by faculty outside their discipline, and that it was more difficult to receive a fair evaluation from administration outside their academic area. Evaluators should not be allowed to use these tools to punish faculty for things that are not really part of their job duties. Hopefully these document changes will help to alleviate the potential for retaliatory evaluations. Dr. Whelan offered that she would hope that any faculty member who feels that they are being retaliated against would come straight to her. Carmine asked a question about past use of professional development committees...a committee who evaluated the legitimacy of proposed professional development activities. He asked about when faculty end up with a performance remediation plan, is there a support system in mind or in place to be a repository of resources for faculty who need various professional development opportunities. Dr. Whelan offered that there would be as much support for rectification of shortcomings in areas where faculty need support, including professional development, where funds allow. Breana asked Dr. Whelan to clarify what a score of “exemplary” would mean to her. Dr. Whelan noted that it would be characterized by

“going above and beyond expectations consistently...all the time, and not just some times.” Breana asked whether this evaluation would be used to help plan for the next year, with respect to the percentage weights in particular areas. Dr. Whelan noted that the goal of the evaluation is to help faculty to continually improve in areas that they want to improve in. Dr. Whelan clarified that her conversations with evaluators have emphasized the intention that the evaluations should be to help faculty maximize their efforts. Carmine asked about the application of “other” contributions in areas that don’t necessarily fit in a category. Dr. Whelan clarified that “other” contributions just needed explanation for why the contribution belongs in the category. Christine asked about what weight the student success rates will carry. Dr. Whelan said that the percentages were designed to show where faculty are focusing their energies. Christine clarified that she was asking about the actual student success rates. Dr. Whelan said that they were really looking more at whether or not a particular faculty member’s success rates were considered an “outlier” as compared to other faculty who teach those classes. Christine asked if there would be a way to address/justify high DFW rates for students who simply stop coming to class and/or who never turn in assignments. Dr. Whelan noted that faculty needed to be doing as much as they can to document students who are in those categories. Dr. Whelan noted that she would consider tracking those kinds of students as possibly being one thing that could be included in student success. Form passed the vote. March 15 was proposed as the new deadline for all faculty annual reports, and Dr. Whelan will pursue that with HR, but thoughts it would be fine.

- IX. Unfinished Business: Breana asked for any unfinished business. No business proposed.
- X. Adjournment: Motion and second to adjourn were made and vote to adjourn passed. Meeting adjourned at 10:23 AM, Friday, February 2, 2024.