



Faculty Council

February 11, 2022 Agenda with Minutes

The mission of the Northeastern State University Faculty Council is to promote communication and cooperation among the faculty and between the faculty and the administration. The Council serves as the faculty's collective voice in shared governance in order to achieve excellence in the academic endeavors of the university. Toward this goal, the Council seeks to enhance the university's pursuit and dissemination of knowledge by promoting and preserving academic freedom and integrity, encouraging creative inquiry, and recognizing scholarly achievement. The Council further serves to foster the professional development and economic well-being of the faculty ~ Adopted by the Council, February 6, 2004.

Meetings: First Friday of the Month - 3:00 - 5:00 pm

<https://nsuok.zoom.us/j/98709179683>

Call to Order: 3:01 pm

Quorum Check: 13/21

Guests (Time is typically set aside for guests who wish to address the council):

- Dr. Cari Weaver Keller, Dean, Graduate College, Executive Director, Planning & Assessment.
With Dr. Kim Williams. Current Strategic Plan in place and the amendment that both end in June 2023. A committee has been appointed to steer the efforts for the new Strategic Plan. Need to do an environmental scan. Look internally and externally. Can do both. Overview of the timeline. Nathan can follow up on feedback from Faculty Council. An anonymous survey has been sent out to everyone. Due on the 18th. Reflect on our experiences here and at other places. Foundation has incentives, 9 \$100 gift cards. They want our individual feedback. And then we need collective feedback. Talking with the Councils and the Committees to ask questions through your representation of your group. Nathan will pull together a focus group from Faculty Council to get our collective feedback. A SWOT analysis will be done with this information so the new Strategic Plan can go forward. The Strategic Plan effort is an effort of the entire institution and not just top-down. Internally, look at strengths and weaknesses, and look externally at opportunities and threats. The committee will write a paper and then will work with the administration to continue the rest of the process: Mission, Vision, and Values, etc. Community Town Halls will be held in late February, early March. Nathan: some concern that faculty are not included on the committee. Faculty Council will have members from each College and Division. The large Strategic Planning Committee has many faculty members on it and they will have much involvement in the process. The website is being redesigned to include a SP update section. Nathan will send a message to ask for volunteers.
- Dr. Jerrid Freeman, Vice President, Student Affairs and Enrollment Management
They give an update on the Retention Retreat in December. One day invited people to come talk about ideas for retention. Had an open line for feedback on ideas on the web. Took all those ideas and put them into a format. There were 21 tables of people focused on the different types of students; FTFT, transfer, nontraditional, etc. In January worked on student feedback. They used free response form and also focus groups. Collated all the responses from all three campuses. Made a second list and merged the

data. What are things we can do right now and what are things that are longer-term? Short-term priorities and more in-depth items are being developed from the long list. Renee is on the Retention Committee. Have to find a balance between the needs of the students and the health of the institution. Their next meeting is next week (of the 14th). An email will be sent to the faculty once they get the priorities highlighted.

- Dr. Kelly Jo Larsen, Assistant Vice President for Enrollment Management
Kelly Jo held focus groups. She found that the groups were very positive. One took place on each campus. Asked them how they felt about the value of their degrees, getting their money's worth, good faculty relationships, flexible and accommodating. Lots of ideas were forthcoming. Our students are happy with their experiences and have ideas to make it even better.
Nathan: something that is detrimental to us is when there's a single incident and then everyone feels targeted and burdens are added in the outcome.
Jerrid: A good example is a constant course-shell. Everyone has a different perspective on what these look like. What's feasible to manage in terms of the numbers of suggestions for improvements. Some things are simple to do, while others are more complicated and will require planning. Communication is a key value to outcomes benefitting NSU. Q: Not sure why some of these decisions aren't pushed down to the department level, forcing those discussions there. Our students online are different from our face to face classes. There shouldn't be a cross the board shell for the whole university, but should be taken at the department level. R: The group plans to engage these conversations across everyone. How do they begin to actualize these ideas?
Cross-college, cross-division inputs are needed. Work-groups will steer these conversations.
Nathan: can the list be shared for the purpose of thinking about these things? Make corrections to what we're doing. Q: some faculty feel they are shouldering the blame and when they talk about it, they're minimized. Don't want administration minimizing their concerns. N: Faith in the group, who are here talking to us. Jerrid: understands the need to be as transparent as possible. They meet on Tuesdays and they will discuss what to put out in our media. Wants everyone to be in the loop and feel like their voices are heard. They are trying to guide the Cabinet in the conversation.
Kelly Jo: Don't want to overpromise and manage expectations of what will happen. Q: mentions of focus groups being positive, how were they constructed? Member has heard negative comments. No other parameters than students on campus. Kelly Jo: Random selection of 100 students across three campuses who were given \$75 tuition remission and reminded to sign up and then show up. Kelly Jo: stop-out out-reach to those students who are not enrolled in another university, and will send out survey with additional questions. Hard to get in contact with students. Sometimes we have some of that data, but not enough to be able impact their situations. Can contact Jerrid Freeman or Kelly Jo Larsen if we have other questions.

Approval of Minutes: <https://offices.nsuok.edu/facultycouncil/Minutes>

*Note: December minutes. FC did not meet in January: motion from Grant, second from Steven. 16/16 approved.

Approval of Agenda motion to approve. Stephen, Luke. Count: 16/16 approved.

Old Business Items:

- **COVID reporting:** numbers are looking very good. How we should report covid data: get in touch with Chair and fill out the Report a Concern link for Covid. Started to edge up with Omicron and now coming down. Q: how do we know what the numbers really are on the campus? Asked around the chain of command to find out how to provide information was confusing. Are the numbers accurate? Who isn't reporting? What is being done to correct information to HR and the chain without confusion? Faculty called HR and they were understaffed and got the runaround. Nathan was told to fill out the form for students. Report to your Chair and they will report to HR. You don't have to fill out the Report a Concern. Q: If

you're sick for 3 days and need to be under medical treatment, that's an FMLA concern, so you need to send HR an email. That's all you have to do. HR is responsible for employee members. We need to test negative with a medical professional or a medical note before we can come back to work. Free tests at the NEO Health at the FIT, are available for faculty, staff and students at NSU. Students can return after 5 days.

- **Budget:** on the agenda from now until the rest of this fiscal year: Ongoing concern with the budget. Email from Dr. Turner last week. Need to cut \$1mil from each division. \$620,000 has to come out of Academic Affairs now. The bad we've cut 2.4mil and now we have to cut more. When does this look like faculty lines? They don't know, but they are starting to run out of money to use. Discussions taking place within colleges. Is there discretionary money that we can pull back first? Hopeful part: trying to put us in a better position for next fall. How much cash we have vs what we need for the fall? Graduate programs have high enrollment. International students are picking up. Hopefully more freshman and we need to work on retention. Many TCC students are fully online and not back in classes. We are doing an incredible job. We need our students to come back and new ones to come here. Hopeful that we can meet this moment. Q: are we in a hiring freeze right now? "Chill" - means freeze for a short time. Haven't heard any changes in policy yet. Qs: We have money in the reserve and we've used it before - and shouldn't rely on it. What is being dipped out of the reserve now? Units - colleges having to reduce by 5-6%, is the President's budget being reduced too? The last time we had this straightforward conversation, Grace Asso. were brought in to look at our programs - do that now? What about eliminating Adjuncts and Overloads - very concerned about this happening. Faculty moral is down. Need to provide a course-overload. Some programs can't survive without overloading some classes. Does the integrity of the curriculum go down? Nathan: Money in the reserve has been used, but don't know the exact number right now. Money across the university: he would be shocked if the President's budget isn't cut. Nathan will ask. Don't have a good insight into the number of students in classes. The list in CBT are the same being used in every college to look at loads. Make sure that faculty teaching low-loads are teaching lower classes so teaching more students. If we don't have more students in the fall, we're looking at a very uncomfortable situation. Some programs are legacy and will always be here. Some other programs, the first line of defense have the right number of faculty for the right number of students. Low numbers of students per faculty make for bad math. We have to be aware of this. He will talk to the Provost about adjuncts and overloads. Carla says that they have not discussed this yet. Dr. Landry will be looking at reports next week and talking to the colleges. Q: The loss of adjuncts and the inability to overload classes reduces credit hour production. It puts programs in a bind. Carla: pass this feedback to your Deans right away. Q: What is the sustainable plan? How do we work together as a team? Work with Alumnae, community, etc., We aren't alone. What are the root areas that each person can do? Maybe we should ask for transparency about what are cuts are?

New Business Items:

Virtual days vs snow days: Last Wednesday, Thursday, Friday: For Wednesday they went by the weather forecast. Why not virtual? When we do that, we can be able to accommodate students who may not have access to a hotspot or have the equipment. Equity issue. Faculty side: some many have kids, kids out of school for snow days; when so quick, it's hard to turn around. Does online stay open when the campus is closed? Sign up for alerts:

<https://offices.nsuok.edu/publicsafety/emergency-alerts.aspx>

- **Circle of Excellence:** nominations have gone out. Need them by February 21st at 5pm at the latest. Nathan reached out to the prior awardees. Six of them are on the committee.
- Appellate Committee: Nominations are coming due. If a Tenured Faculty member is being dismissed, they have an appellate process. Two-year terms. Big thank you to those of you have served. It's in the Faculty Handbook, Section 3.5.5. <https://academicaffairs.nsuok.edu/FacultyResources/faculty-handbook-2021.pdf>. Nathan will verify the nominations. Four representatives from Faculty Council will serve.
- Guns on Campus: OSHRE has asked the President to ask the groups for resolutions supporting the present law. Law: Guns on campus for those who have the permission of the President. Request has been made to make a Resolution by the Faculty Council. Should it be drafted to be

voted on? Comments: the last time this came up that a faculty member has too many opinions to want to participate. Sarah: what this point, delegates go back to their faculty members and ask them and bring those viewpoints back to the Faculty Council. NSGA has passes a resolution to uphold the current law. This will be on the agenda next month and if you want to talk to your faculty, please do that. Q: Can we all have the same question? Nathan: will forward the previous resolution. Do we want to see the faculty association draft a resolution supporting the current guns on campus law.

Committee and Standing Reports (as needed):

- Faculty Welfare Committee: Ms. Sarah Whittle
- Faculty Awards Committee: Dr. Nathan Green
- Ad hoc Strategic Plan Committee: Dr. Nathan Green
- Ad hoc Budget Committee: Dr. Cheryl Van Den Handel
- HawkTalks: Dr. Pamela Louderback
- University Committee Report: Academic Calendar coming out soon.
- Juneteenth announcement
 - Enrollment Correction Committee: Dr. Das Bradoo
 - Faculty Development: Dr. Pamela Louderback
 - Faculty Research: Dr. Pamela Louderback and Dr. Farina King
 - Healthy Campus: Dr. Cheryl Van Den Handel: stuff soming up. Asking Aron to meet with us next month.
 - Strategic Planning: Dr. Nathan Green
 - University Advising : Tom Rink
 - DEI: Jeopardy game over Zoom
- University Committee Reports by Dr. Nathan Green and Ms. Sarah Whittle

Important Dates:

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Motion to adjourn. 5:01pm