



NORTHEASTERN
STATE UNIVERSITY

Faculty Council

September 3, 2021

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: 3:02pm

Quorum Check: 18 delegates (yes) 30 participants

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

- **President Turner: *Be Seen in Green*** on Fridays. Conversations with colleges about covid and at the opening meeting. NSU's response will be proportionate to the actual threat to the campuses. The high-water mark was on Jan 11, 2021. Tahl. 822 known active, Musk, ?, BA 646. Tahlequah is about half, Muskogee less, and BA is 65% of the high water mark. Hospitals and officials meeting last week, estimated it to be the surge week. The state health report is released only on Wednesdays. This week saw a percentage increase, the numbers rose a little. Going back to August 11, Tahlequah was up 103%, Muskogee 97%, B.A.69%. On Aug 25th, Oklahoma saw a decline in cases. All three cities were trending downward. In the next week there were slight increases. Some 92% of hospitalizations are not vaccinated, and 75% are elderly. Breakthrough cases make up about 2%. For NSU our certified highwater mark for students was 38 just after Labor Day last year; 39 students and 6 employees with Covid this fall semester. There were 7 known cases this summer. The high mark for staff was just after Thanksgiving last year. A large number are on recovery this week. Here's how it works: Counting stops on Friday night; Monday is certification and calculations; Wednesday is the report. Some of the rhetoric out there doesn't match reality. *Get vaccinated and put your mask on* is what he recommends. Medical doctors and officials are encouraged. Dr. Turner's not alarmed.

Mask Mandates: what will NSU do about mask mandates? For Faculty living with unvaccinated children, the focus is on K-12. Answer: SB 658 addressed every level. A similar bill passed in 17 states.

The K-12 lawsuit is limited. The legislature was very specific. The only reason the judge put a stay is because the *public vs private* school policies do not match. No implications impact higher education from the lawsuit. He talked about the lawsuit and he talked about the Governor and Attorney General taking legal action against Schools who implemented mask mandates.

Covid Testing is available at the NEO center, Tahlequah, at NEO Muskogee, and at Arkansas Verdigris for the B.A. campus. Available since April. Not many accessed these.

Vaccinations: We had a vaccination event during Welcome Week, where 40 were vaccinated in Tahlequah, while on other campuses, the people with reservations didn't show up.

Status of banked personal leave and access to that: Prior to the Feds kicking in about March 23 through April to the sick leave program - everyone was eligible for extra sick leave and if you had childcare issues, you got more. It was Covid FMLA and it expired in March of 2021. But in some cases it could voluntarily be extended to the end of May. Federal leave is no longer available, but there's a draft document in HR to help cover some people.

People with cancer and/or surgeries ran out of leave, now we have some staff or faculty who need assistance. If a new faculty member is past their 6 month probationary period, and they have covid or their child has covid, or school is closed, we have an 80-hour program to help. Factual information will go out next week. Administrator probation is a year. NSU is being proactive with regard to Covid. Vigilance hasn't stopped.

At the opening meeting, our retention is tight, and today is Census day. We won't get the real numbers until next Wednesday or Thursday. We're down about 3%. Our retention rates are lowest in a decade, especially at the Freshman and Sophomore level. Thoughtful, productive conversations need to take place about what we can do as an institution to improve retention.

Travel out of state: 1. Funded with federal dollars, 2. It's in pursuit of federal dollars, 3. Essential to the mission and critical functions of the institution such as accreditation.

Fee for VCM: If a student wants to take a class via VCM, charging them so much more is discouraging. Students need to be met where they are. Is the fee going to go away, spread out, phased out? NSU has begun a transition to spread the fee out. Student government agreed. There's a structure of 3 to 5 years that started July 1, 2021.

- **Shannon Schwaebler**- *Director of Career Services*: Passed some resources to Nathan to pass to delegates to pass to everyone. They are here to support us. Faculty Resources for the fall; including events. 1. Career Services has seen an increase in employers coming to campus seeking out students. If an employer reaches out, please send them to Career Services. 2. **Career and Internship & Major Exploration Fair** is merging two events together. They are seeking volunteers to come talk about their departments. *Day 1 Virtual on Handshake* and *Day 2 In Person*. All University Strategy Students will be there. All students and alumni. Deans and Chairs will know. There's a form linked to indicate participation. Link in our Inbox. 3. Market Yourself booklet: Condensed resources into a one-stop booklet. She's hoping that next year they will be checking in to see that they are helping with what faculty need for students. Career Services is on the Tahlequah and BA Campuses, and they can accommodate Muskogee also, although no office is there.
- **Leigh-Anna Miller**- *Director of Counseling Services*, **HawkReach**: Student counseling. Faculty do not have good skills to handle some student issues. A new program is coming out to everyone soon. Their office is in North Loeser. They do have therapists on all three campuses and offer individual therapy. HawkReach offers some in-person and group-setting treatment. There is a Case-manager, Student Advocate on staff. Works with students on sexual assault, trauma,

dealing with the court system, etc. There's also help for the Faculty. Many referrals are from Faculty. If we notice changes, something about a student that seems off, they will do wellness checks for those students. Most students seeking help are Juniors, Seniors, and Grads. Freshmen don't often engage in needed counseling. We need to encourage them.

New program for higher ed. Kognito Campus: it's a virtual simulation that Faculty and staff can do, where we are taught how to respond to student issues. It takes about 30 minutes to complete. Everyone should do it. We have it free for a year. NSU has students with significant mental health issues. The first two weeks this semester have been overwhelming. They are going to do a raffle once we complete the training. Email and let Leigh-Anna Miller know that we've completed it. The raffle is the week of *October 10th. World Mental Health Day.*

Is there a "walk-in Wednesday"? Yes. It's offered on all 3 campuses from 8 am to 11:30 am.
We received a Fall newsletter. Are those regular? Do they put fliers up, social media that can be forwarded? Tell us more about that? This week coming up information will be pushed out including email, social media, and flyers.

Approval of Minutes: <https://offices.nsuok.edu/facultycouncil/Minutes> (April minutes tabled to October)

Approval of Agenda: Approval by consensus.

Nathan is thankful and grateful for Renee's tireless efforts. Stop by and let her know what Renee's actions have meant to us. Also please inform people that Renee is no longer the contact person for the Faculty Council.

Introductions: Delegates introduced themselves via Nathan's Excel list. Many people are guests. The meetings are truly open to everyone. If we need a closed meeting, that's doable. We appreciate the guests who are here. We appreciate you being here.

New Business Items:

- Committee replacement votes
- **Faculty Handbook:** The changes are helpful. Nathan sent three documents for us to look at. Important Items:- 1. when a Faculty member can go up for tenure. Change from submitting at the end of the 5th year to the beginning of the 5th year.

Nathan doesn't expect all of us to read all three documents. However, we have to vote on these changes before our next meeting due to the Provost's Review and President's Review. All of the signatures are needed by Sept. 30th. Faculty Council must have our part completed by Sept. 16th. Nathan will send out a Google form for us to vote. Please email comments to Nathan. He will make a Google document with all of our comments. Thank you to [Carla Swearingen](#), who created the documents for us to review.

The new Faculty Handbook will go into effect on Oct. 1st, Tenure packets this year will follow the previous Handbook. If following the new one, that's ok. Colleges were interpreting the post-tenure review as requiring a full portfolio, and some require only a CV. Now it's just a CV, not a portfolio. Refer to the new Handbook for Post-Tenure Review. Science and Health Professions still want more than a CV. Discussions are ongoing with the Dean. The purpose for the change is that NSU is looking for more equity across the university. Thanks to Dr. Swearingen for leading this.

- **Homecoming** (September 27-October 2) <https://www.nsualumni.com/>
 - Trivia night (Virtual and In-person) 9/28 at 6pm: Details soon.
 - Office decorating competition (all week) "Theme: NSU Soar On"
 - Nathan walked the Faculty Council back from Homecoming not to overcommit people. If you want to commit, be involved, reach out to the NSU Alumni Association, or to Nathan. Multiple plans are going on. Green, Yellow, and Red. Yellow now: scaled back.
 - Tailgating: Katie and Nathan can organize it, but not too many Faculty here have expressed interest.

- Future: College Teach-in: B&T has done this for about 15 years. Alumni become *teachers for a day*. It helps the college maintain contacts with industry, etc. There's a low-entry bar for this. Near the end of this academic year, get B&T to give us a primer. It's complicated. Focused more on course delivery and keeping everyone safe.
- **NSU app student adoption:** Download the App. It's a free, fantastic app. It may eliminate email from students. It's a great resource and may make the university run more efficiently. Talk to students about it. Not all of the due dates are not showing up there, from Blackboard into the App. Maybe I.T. should come and talk to us. Ask [Kelly Jo Larsen](#) to speak to us. Nathan will check on due-dates.
- **At Risk Simulation** for Faculty and Staff: Simulation. Discussed by Leigh Anna Miller. [Ok.kognito.com](#) and it's free. There's 3 situations.

Committee and Standing Reports (as needed):

- Faculty Welfare Committee: Ms. Sarah Whittle, Steven Sargeant, [Pamela Louderback](#)
Initial concerns brought by Faculty in need of action. If so, the committee tries to find relief through conversation. If not, then elevated to the Faculty Council. Maybe nothing at times, or very concerning.
- 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
 - Enrollment Correction Committee: Sapna Das-Bradoo
 - Sarah introduced herself. The committee is run by Tammy Perry and 5 or 6 people meet monthly, mostly by email. It's low-maintenance. If a student has an issue like changing a grade, filling out a form, medical issue forms, etc., and turning everything into the Registrar. Tammy will send everything to the committee and vote yes or no by email.
 - Faculty Development: Dr. Pamela Louderback
 - Faculty Research: Dr. Pamela Louderback and Dr. Farina King
 - Staying the same. Discussions are on the amount of money that can be spent and who gets it. All issues are about Faculty research.
 - Healthy Campus: Dr. Cheryl Van Den Handel
 - Strategic Planning: Dr. Nathan Green
 - University Advising : FC reps. [Julia Carlo](#) chairs the committee. They meet once a month. Tom Rink.
- University Committee Reports by Dr. Nathan Green and Ms. Sarah Whittle

For the good of the order:

Issue: Professor uses Powerball.com and our network would not let him go there. A professor has used it for a spreadsheet class for a few years now and then it was blocked by NSU. It's fixed now. Is NSU Administration policing sites?

We will be respectful of your time. Motion to adjourn: Tom Seconded by Amber. Time 4:50pm