

JSCC Faculty Council Meeting Minutes—February 15th, 2017

The Faculty Council met Wednesday, February 15th, 2016 at 3:00 p.m. in room 103 of the Nelms Classroom Building.

Present: Mark Walls, Scott Woods, Amy Wake, Dr. Larry Gundersen, Lisa Matlock, Melina Sellers, Jennifer Reaves, Dr. Liz Mayo, Roger James, Tony Rafalowski, Dr. Billy Wesson, Dr. Leslie West-Sands, Dr. Allana Hamilton, visitor

AGENDA ITEMS

1. Dr. Hamilton's Remarks

Dr. Allana Hamilton updated the Council on her progress with understanding Jackson State's issues and operations. She asked the Council to consider ways the faculty might best communicate with her. She emphasized that during the presidential interview process she had heard that a key need was improving college communications. She reviewed her efforts so far to meeting with small groups of stakeholders to begin doing this, and she summarized future plans for a March retreat, an April campus-wide meeting, and pilots of other avenues for communication. She reviewed her efforts to engage with community stakeholders, her development of talking points, and her desire to help the community better understand JSCC's programs. In discussion with Dr. Hamilton, Scott Woods summarized the current Faculty Council Constitution and the proposed terms of a new one that would soon be presented to the faculty to ratify. Dr. Gundersen proposed that 100 unused laptops in the McWherter Building might be offered to students for check-out. Lisa Matlock reviewed issues faculty encounter with the school's five-year rotation of computers, noting in IT, especially, faculty need updated resources much sooner than they are scheduled to receive them.

2. Announcements

Scott Woods reviewed the following:

- the necessity of CCSSE data for performance funding;
- the status of an institutional statement rejecting Tennessee SB 0131 (introduced by Senator Mark Green and sponsored by Representative Andy Holt); if passed, the bill would allow on JSCC's campus "a person [unless] otherwise prohibited by law to possess a firearm or weapon . . . to carry a firearm or weapon, openly or concealed, regardless of whether the person has a handgun permit." Woods explained that JSCC's Professional/Technical Employee and Classified Employee Councils had agreed to draft a statement, but that there was general agreement about drafting a collective statement by all JSCC employees that vigorously rejects this bill;

- the progress toward enabling faculty to ratify a revised Faculty Council Constitution (Woods noted that the new and old constitutions were now distributed to faculty for review).

3. Recruiting and Hiring Tenure-Track Faculty

The Council discussed issues with a pattern of hiring faculty on contracts that were not tenure-track. It was noted that the spirit of the one-year temporary contract was to hire for unforeseen or emergency staffing needs and that when a clear ongoing need for faculty positions exists, they should be advertised as tenure-track. It was suggested that offering temporary or term contracts for on-going positions was not “humane” and that it created problems attracting strong candidates for jobs. It was also noted, though, that in some technical disciplines more flexible temporary or term contracts made some sense. It was noted that faculty teaching general education classes with provocative or debatable content often may need the security of tenure track positions. Faculty in the technologies or health care areas may not feel as compelled to seek the protections tenure affords. Sometimes, too, departments in the technologies may be served more practically by faculty hired on temporary or term contracts. However, the Council considered that faculty contracts leading to tenure are critical for shared governance. Recent critical differences in perspective between President Blanding and faculty and staff could not have been engaged without the protections of faculty tenure. The Council was encouraged never to forget tenure assures faculty voice regardless of perceived need for academic freedom or practical staffing logistics unique to disciplines.

The Council proposed that the Executive Committee should discuss these issues with Dr. Bailey. The council’s aim was to suggest that faculty who have not been tenure-track but are clearly in long-term, ongoing positions be moved to tenure track as soon as possible and that it be a clear faculty expectation administrators will work with deans in the disciplines to sensitively, not unilaterally, determine contract offers and conversions where appropriate. The Council was reminded of the potential for a tenure debate at the Sub-council level.

4. Faculty Pay Scale and Retirement Issues

The Council discussed concerns about pay scale “compression” and the ratios of new-hire faculty salaries to those of more veteran faculty. It was noted that a re-examination of faculty pay scales should become a new campus initiative.

Some Council members also discussed their disappointment about missing more beneficial state consolidated retirement options because JSCC had hired them as temporary or term employees. Without assurances of ongoing, full-time employment through a tenure-track contract, some shared their decisions not to join the state plan but to maintain other retirement options like TIAA-CREF. If hired on a more productive and promising contract, they explained, they likely would have made different decisions.

5. Certified Mental Health Counselors

The Council discussed the need for adding certified mental health counseling options at JSCC, perhaps through Pathways or WRAP. It was noted that this position had been on the Student Services budget but not filled.

6. Procedure for Ratifying the Constitution

The Council heard comments from a faculty member about the need to enable a proper motion, second and discussion for the faculty's ratification of the new Council constitution. It was agreed that any discussion could be enabled electronically through a blog, elearn, or by a "reply all" response to the email announcement of the ratification vote.

7. Difficulties Arranging Faculty/Student Activities

The Council considered issues some faculty expressed about difficulties arranging facilities and printing materials for student functions. It was noted that Victor Garcia might be able to create a J-WEB resource through which rooms might be reserved. Faculty discussed the burden of filling out facilities request forms, seeking purchase orders, maintaining receipts, filing printing orders and requesting public document numbers. The Council believed that much of this might be streamlined.

A motion was made to ask Victor Garcia and Sonny Davis to work on a more streamlined solution for online forms processing. The motion was seconded. There was no discussion and the motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.



Mark E. Walls, Secretary

Scott Woods, Chair