

## Faculty Senate Notes

December 12, 2023

Holloway Hall 119

<https://www.salisbury.edu/administration/campus-governance/faculty-senate/>

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Call to order (3:33 pm)

1. Announcements from President Lepre
  - a. Thank you to all Faculty for the semester
  - b. Previous Friday's budget presentation was a first step in giving a clear picture of university's budget and where SU is for next year
    - i. Admin will be visiting individual departments in future to answer questions point-by-point
    - ii. President requests that departments let them know in advance what kinds of things we want answered so that they can be prepared
  - c. President spends a lot of time off campus advocating for more resources
    - i. Engaging with government entities, private organizations, private donors, etc. to bring in more funds
    - ii. This all takes time to build those relationships and trust
    - iii. There will be exciting news to share in January but cannot be disclosed yet
  - d. New legislative session is about to begin
    - i. President will bring updates about some important legislation: juvenile justice reform, campus safety, state budget, university program approval process, environmental policy related to campus buildings, overall campus operations, Blueprint Maryland
  - e. Goodbyes: Thank you to Dr. Karen Olmstead for her 15 years here
    - i. Greg Bassett has passed; editor and founder of Salisbury Independent and integrally involved with SU
  - f. Question from Senator: Why did administration not respond to email about SU making no statement on the Israel-Hamas conflict?
    - i. Answer from President: Never received that message
      1. POST-MEETING CLARIFICATION: Faculty Senate President emailed the Provost (with Chief of Staff and Faculty Senate officers cc'd) on 10/31 inquiring into why SU made no statement and did not receive a response
    - ii. Answer: University has had a longstanding policy of following the Chicago principles which prevents SU from making public statements about international conflicts
      1. Several student groups (Hillel of Salisbury and Muslim Student Association) asked President not to make a statement

2. There have been forums, interactions between students, etc. regarding this
  3. SU would not tolerate threats, hate speech, etc. on campus
  4. Part of the consideration was campus safety and security. Avoided public statement for that reason
  5. Office of Diversity and Inclusion has not heard any concerns about Jewish students feeling unsafe or unwelcome
  6. President acknowledges that she is trying to do the right thing, not always knowing what the right thing is
- iii. Response from Senator: Input should come from Faculty as well, not only students.
1. Also, This conflict has involved Americans so is not just an international conflict
- g. Comment from Senator: Meetings with upper admin and individual departments can make departments feel like they are being interviewed and puts pressure on them. It is tough to decide how to communicate at the appropriate level
- i. Answer from President: President welcomes feedback on how best to communicate this info to everyone
    1. President herself has had to learn the terminology and systems here, along with the Provost, VP of Admin and Finance, etc., so communication is still building
    2. President is aware that Faculty have questions they're not getting answers to and is open to feedback on how best to disseminate those answers
- h. Comment from Senator: Would be good to send out budget info ahead of time so that Faculty can be more prepared with questions instead of presenting a big umbrella overview
- i. Answer from President: Upper admin agreed that they had to talk about something to try to answer concerns before winter break
    1. Info can be put on website. Context can be tough because some charts, etc. need explanation
- i. Comment from Senator: Beneficial to have actual data where everyone can access it rather than only disseminating it through Faculty Senate. In past it has been difficult to get actual data from admin without threats of a FOIA request
- i. Answer from President: Thank you.
- j. Question from Senator: What is President's perspective on Faculty concerns and morale?
- i. Answer from President: Faculty concerns took President by surprise.
    1. President had been asked a couple small individual questions and large budget questions, but had not heard of almost anything in that letter
    2. President understands that Faculty have had concerns, but President and Provost had not heard of them in other venues
    3. President is open to meetings with Faculty via scheduling on phone
    4. President is available around campus

5. President is unaware of why Faculty have felt that way
  - k. Comment from Senator: Faculty do not feel comfortable asking Provost and President questions at Faculty Senate meetings or other venues because upper admin has authority over their jobs. Faculty want admin to have more relaxed conversations with them rather than more formal, structured conversations
    - i. Answer from President: President would love feedback on what kind of venue would allow for an open conversation. President is unsure of what she has done to cause Faculty to fear for job security because she has not allowed any positions go
  - l. Comment from Senator: Communications have felt very top down: "These are the decisions that we are making." Rather than making decisions based on Faculty feedback.
    - i. Answer from President: Thank you for feedback.
  - m. Comment from Senator: On a more optimistic note, more budget info has been shared recently than has been given years in the past. Many alumni respond have communicated their love of SU
    - i. Answer from President: President implores Faculty to work with her. The relationship between Faculty and admin need not be adversarial
2. Approval of minutes
    - a. Minutes from the November 28, 2023 regular business meeting approved as written
  3. Announcements from Provost Couch
    - a. Has been on a tour of academic departments and has been to 28 department meetings. Still 3 more departments to go to as well as Library and non-academic units. Has learned a lot since starting five months ago.
    - b. Provost will send out progress report around end of semester
    - c. Commencement is 12/20. Please RSVP if you have not already
    - d. Fiscal year '24 budget (because FY '24 ends in June)
      - i. Spent first 3 months at SU taking stock of how to budget, plan, and spend money. Met with Deans, program directors, etc. to try to learn about this
      - ii. Tried to identify patterns as to what SU is spending money on to see if we were investing strategically. Also tried to see if our spending was in line with our revenue
      - iii. Budget is tight. Had to decide how to allocate money. Supplemental requests were for trying to get funds for things that could not fit into budget
        1. e.g. Supplemental funds to keep adjunct Faculty on for classes
        2. e.g. Supplemental funds for travel for recruitment
        3. Academic Affairs had ~\$5 million in requests and was granted ~\$3 million.
          - a. Provost split requests between Fall and Spring
          - b. Has asked Deans to tighten belts
            - i. e.g. Class scheduling savings: 1 class of 20 rather than 2 classes of 10 to avoid needing to hire adjunct
            - ii. e.g. Reducing elective offerings

- iii. Has saved some money for Spring by doing this while still meeting student needs
  - c. Looking at operating expenses
    - i. Asking whether some purchases are needed right now or can wait
  - d. Trying to be cost-conscious while still meeting institutional mission
  - e. 62 open positions when Provost started; 33 were Faculty and rest were staff.
    - i. 22 are filled or in process
    - ii. 10 positions being held for budget reasons
      - 1. Wants to look in February for Fall enrollments. If projection looks good, those positions will be released for filling. Would be irresponsible to release positions now before we have more solid projections
      - 2. Asking Deans for rich information to be able to prioritize those positions
- e. Question from Senator: Faculty position hiring process needs to start in Fall because that is the schedule nation-wide. If we release these positions in spring, how can we still get qualified Faculty?
  - i. Answer from Provost: Provost understands but was worried about us starting to interview people in Fall and then having to withdraw position if budget was bad
- f. Question from Senator: What progress has been made on HR processes for hiring?
  - i. Answer from Provost: New VP of Admin and Finance is working on streamlining process
    - 1. Intends to update HR website with a goal deadline of before Feb

#### 4. Announcements from the Senate President

- a. Forming an ad hoc committee of Senators to write a report based on 12/12 special session meeting that will be due by second Faculty Senate meeting in Feb
  - i. Report will include concerns, how we would like admin to respond and timeline of response
  - ii. Senate President called for volunteers
  - iii. Had ~150 Faculty present at 12/12 special session meeting, either in person or online
  - iv. Senate President asks that any other feedback goes to her so that it can be passed on to ad hoc committee
- b. Special session meeting on 2/20 about budget should be moved room from Holloway 119 into a larger room
- c. Comment from Senator: Senate President represented Faculty concerns very well at special session meeting

5. New business

a. MOTION on GEOC standing rules change

- i. From Senator proposing motion: Motion was approved recently to move gen ed approval process to an editorial model. This motion makes specific changes
  1. There are many vacancies on committees. Hopefully this revised process frees up Faculty time so that they will hopefully be able to fill spots on other committees
- ii. Comment from Senator: Concerned about language of appointing 'experts' to review courses because we are all experts in our field. We should not suggest that some Faculty are more expert than others
  1. Concerned that people currently on GEOC subcommittees would be recommending editorial Faculty. Instead, reviewers should be elected
  2. Also, subcommittees were supposed to start working on assessing gen ed courses to check that gen ed courses are meeting SLOS. They haven't been asked to do that yet because subcommittees have been working on approval so far
    - a. If subcommittees are gotten rid of, that assessment role may fall through cracks
  3. Basically, it is too early to move away from subcommittee model. We are not in a 'maintenance' phase of gen eds yet.
  4. Response from another Senator: The word 'expert' is not in documents associated with this motion
- iii. Comment from Senator: UAAC has started figuring out some assessment stuff and hopes to get some stuff ready by Feb. Agrees that we are not yet in a maintenance phase of gen eds
  1. Also, many subcommittee members elected by default because not enough people ran
- iv. Comment from Senator: Something must change because subcommittees are unable to get through everything on time
- v. Friendly amendment: "The change to the GEOC standing rules shall be made only if the change to the Faculty Senate bylaws are approved by the whole Faculty in the associated referendum."
  1. Amendment passes
- vi. Question from Senator: Acknowledged that committee positions are unfilled, but radically changing long-term rules to deal with this problem is unwise. Did committee discuss a change to make subcommittees smaller?
  1. Response from GEOC chair: Yes. End result was to decide on moving to editorial model
- vii. Question from Senator: What if fewer Faculty volunteer to review than we currently have on subcommittees? Then those people would have more work
  1. Response from GEOC chair: Goal is to 'pound the pavement' to get more people to volunteer to review so that does not happen
- viii. Comment from Senator: Application process for new gen ed courses is too complicated which is partially why the workload of approval is so high

1. Response from GEOC chair: The reason is SLOs. Because it is based on making sure SLOs are met, more work is required
    - a. GEOC has discussed how to streamline the process and has already streamlined some things
  - ix. Comment from Senator: Faculty would be a lot more willing to review a single course if asked than to agree to serve on a committee and have to review a bunch of stuff
  - x. Question from Senator: How would the proposed model deal with assessing gen ed courses to ensure they are meeting SLOs?
    1. Response from GEOC chair: We could solicit feedback from reviewers on assessment as well
  - xi. Friendly amendment: "The Membership and Elections Committee is directed to include this referendum during the regular spring elections."
    1. Amendment passes
  - xii. Question from Senator: Does suggested standing rules change address the possibility of reviewers being involved in assessment?
    1. Response from GEOC chair: No, but the GEOC was charged by Faculty Senate with assessing, so they have leeway in how to do that
    2. Another Senator: The language in proposed change implies that the reviewers are only involved in course proposals, not assessment
  - xiii. Comment from Senator: Standing rules for GEOC has a lot of appendices that would also need changed to remove mention of subcommittees
  - xiv. Motion passes with amendments
- b. MOTION on Curriculum Approval Guide (CAG)
- i. From Senator proposing motion: FYS seems particularly clunky but is not only troublesome category. Faculty have complained about being asked for more information all the time when proposing courses, even things that are not in CAG. So it is tough to go through curriculum approval process because it is not clear what the requirements are. CAG was originally written when Fulton changed their courses to 4 credit hours (and the fourth credit hour needed to account for 25% of the course grade), but it does not apply well to creating new 4-credit hour courses. We want UCC to update CAG or communicate to Faculty in clearer terms what the requirements are.
  - ii. Comment from Senator: UCC does not require that 4<sup>th</sup> credit hour accounts for 25% of the course grade, so it seems out of line to ask UCC to deal with this
    1. Response from Senator proposing motion: That was just a specific example, but that is not what the motion is specifically about
    2. Senator on UCC: This 25% thing is still used by the UCC sometimes

6. Motion to adjourn approved

Adjourn (5:00 pm)