Minutes for the 44th Faculty Senate Meeting
Monday, December 7th, 2020
4:00 p.m. via Zoom

The meeting of the Faculty Senate was called to order by Dr. Ndi, Chair, at 4:05 p.m. followed with prayer by Mrs. Samuel.

Attendees Present: 28

Names are attached to the meeting minutes. If your name was omitted, please notify the secretary so that it can be added to the roster.

Adoption of the Minutes

It was motioned by Mr. Parham and seconded by Dr. Bender that the minutes be approved with the necessary corrections.

Updates

Dr. Ndi reported that on behalf of the Faculty Senate, welcome letters were sent to Dr. Charlotte P. Morris and Dr. Heshmat Aglan, acknowledging their new roles and positions as interim president and interim provost of the university. If the senate would like to extend an invitation for either of them to address the assembly, let him know.

Committee Chair Reports

Academic Affairs Committee (Mrs. Mary Arrington, Chair)

The AAC committee will meet as programs are proposed. Mrs. Arrington reported that no proposals were submitted on last month, therefore, the committee did not meet. The next meeting is scheduled for December 15th, and any proposed programs should be submitted before this date.

Academic Personnel Services Committee (Dr. Li Huang, Chair)

Dr. Huang was informed by the Provost office that colleges will send applications to the APSC Committee by Thursday, January 21st, 2021. The committee will review applications during the months of January and February 2021.

Research and Graduate Studies Committee (Chair-to be filled)

Dr. Ndi informed the senate that Dr. Abugri, Chair of this committee will be resigning from the University effective December 31st, 2020. If a senator is interested in chairing this committee from now until the end of April, please contact Dr. Ndi.
Continuing Education and Outreach Committee (Dr. Yvette Essounga, Chair)

Dr. Essounga reported that three committee members met on November 5th, at which time they discussed a new approach for implementing their outreach efforts, particularly during the pandemic. She noted that during their meeting, Dr. Bender suggested using video recordings for the proposed workshops. In addition, the committee will identify Tuskegee University students to create and design videos on financial management that are age appropriate and suited for middle schoolers. The committee also discussed developing videos and podcasts for our university community, students, faculty, and staff. These student driven videos would cover topics on mental health, wellness, and financial matters. The committee will meet again in January.

Grievance Committee (Mrs. Eunice Samuel, Chair)

The chair reported that there are no grievances to date.

Instruction Committee (Dr. John Tilghman, Chair)

This committee met on November 4th to edit the online teaching survey which focused on the strengths and weaknesses of teaching during COVID-19. Dr. Tilghman reported that the survey, comprised of thirty questions, was submitted to Dr. Kellie Samuels for distribution beginning on November 16th, 2020. To encourage more participation, the survey deadline was extended to December 11, 2020. Per Dr. Kahai’s request, the link to the survey will be resent.

Other Business

Temporary Senator to Replace Dr. Abugri

Dr. Ndi asked Mrs. Samuel to email the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences requesting him to identify a faculty member to replace Dr. Abugri on the senate for the duration of the term. The appointee will not serve in the capacity of chair of the Research and Graduate Studies Committee.

Teaching Award for Excellence in Online Teaching in Honor of Jacqueline McArthur-Taylor

Sub-Committee Members: Dr. Ann C. Gebhard, Chair, and Dr. John H. Tilghman

Dr. Ndi led this discussion by stating that he had received an email opposing the establishment of an award in honor of Jacqueline McArthur-Taylor, citing that because Ms. McArthur-Taylor was terminated, there might be legal implications. Dr. Ndi consulted with the University’s attorney, who had no recollection of any pending legal issues, but would check his records in follow-up to the matter, then get back with the Chair.

Dr. Gebhard asked from what level did the pushback come from? Dr. Ndi indicated that it had come from the departmental level. In response Dr. Gebhard expressed that since the Faculty Senate is establishing the award, and not the university or administration, the senate should be able to honor whom it chooses. Dr. Ndi echoed Dr. Gebhard’s sentiments and encouraged the committee and the senate to proceed with the process unless there are legal implications that might put the work of the Faculty Senate in jeopardy.
The sub-committee agreed to not only propose an award in excellence in teaching, but one that also recognizes a new kind of teaching because of the development of virtual and online education.

**Proposal to Establish an Award in Honor of Jacqueline McArthur-Taylor**

We propose that the Tuskegee Faculty Senate give an annual award for excellence in online teaching in honor of Jacqueline McArthur-Taylor for her outstanding contributions in helping to establish the program in virtual and distance education at Tuskegee University. This award would be fitting one to remember her long service to the University in laying the foundation for our digital learning and her commitment to excellence in virtual teaching. Ideally, this award would have a monetary amount attached to it, like the other Faculty Achievement awards given annually.

**Letter from the mother of the late Jamarion Robinson, former TU student and athlete**

Dr. Ndi screen shared a letter received from the mother of former student, Jamarion Robinson, who was killed on August 5th, 2016 in Atlanta, Georgia, by a police officer. Senators and other faculty were not aware of the incident, which resulted in numerous questions, comments, news articles being shared, etc. Some, but not all questions centered around the incident itself, the classification of the student, how to donate funds, etc.

The following suggestions were made:

Schedule a zoom meeting with the mother to garner more details.

Award the posthumous degree, if determined that the student was a graduating senior.

Establish a book scholarship in the amount of $300-$400.

Place links on the University’s web page for those wanting to donate to the Justice for Jamarion Fund.

Dr. Ndi will share the G-mail, Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook account information following the meeting.

Mr. Parham and Dr. Ross cautioned against the request for a mural stating that because we have lost several other students, this would have to be an all, inclusive and ongoing effort, and we should be careful not to leave anyone out.

Mrs. Arrington suggested that after more investigation, we should be part of the mother’s plea for help, especially if this is a matter of police brutality. She went on to state that since we are a black institution, we should be supporting the Black Lives Matter Movement.

After much discussion, it was pointed out by Dr. Gebhard that the senate does not have the power to grant any of the request stated in the letter, however, we can strongly advise the administration to respond accordingly, urging them to make a statement to the family. The assembly agreed.
Graduate Student Survey

Dr. Kahai reminded faculty to participate in his graduate students’ survey. He will send out a reminder and strongly encouraged faculty to respond. Upon receipt of the reminder, Dr. Ndi will resend this information to the Deans.

Other Questions

Dr. Ross inquired about the use of the large monetary donations the university has received. Dr. Ndi stated that there are plans to ensure that the workspaces are secure and safe, stating mold eradication in some buildings as an example.

Dr. Nashar asked about the University’s mandate for the COVID-19 vaccination of students, faculty, and staff and the possible ramifications. Dr. Ndi suggested that this matter be placed on the agenda for the next meeting scheduled for January 4, 2020.

It was motioned by Mr. Parham and seconded by Dr. Tilghman and Mrs. Arrington that the meeting adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 5:21 p.m.

Submitted by Eunice A. Samuel, Executive Secretary
December 16, 2020

Chair: Dr Bill F. Ndi
Vice Chair: Dr. Jay Bhuyan
Executive Secretary: Eunice A. Samuel
Attendees-Faculty Senate Meeting December 7, 2020

1. Abebe, Woubit
2. Ankumah, Adaku
3. Arrington, Mary
4. Baig, Zahid
5. Bender, Jennifer
6. Benson, Lynn
7. Bhuyan, Jay
8. Dibaba, Asseged
9. Essounga, Yvette
10. Fishkin, Benjamin
11. Fox, Jeffrey
12. Gebhard, Caroline
13. Glotova, Olga
14. Graham, Jo Ann
15. Gregory Gray
16. Huang, Li
17. Jafarinejad, Shahryar
18. Jones, April
19. Nashar, Toufic
20. Nayak, Chitra
21. Ndi, William
22. Ndoye, Mandoye
23. Oritgoza, Marisol A.
24. Parham, Charles
25. Quarcoo, Franklin
26. Ross, Jennifer
27. Samuel, Eunice
28. Tilghman, John