Minutes for the 44th Faculty Senate Meeting
Monday, November 2nd, 2020
6:00 p.m. via Zoom

The meeting of the Faculty Senate was called to order by Dr. Ndi, Chair, at 6:05 p.m. followed with prayer by Dr. Essounga.

Attendees Present: 33
(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).

Opening Remarks and Updates

Dr. Ndi thanked members for their presence and encouraged us to pray for our institution and for our President, Dr. McNair. Regarding the changes at the level of the Provost office, on behalf of the Faculty Senate, Dr. Ndi thanked Dr. Carla Jackson Bell, who for the past year served as Interim Provost, executing her duties with diligence and fervor. In addition, an email was sent welcoming the new Interim Provost, Dr. Heshmat Aglan, who replied that he looks forward to working with the entire faculty senate.

Regarding other issues, the University has purchased unlimited access to Zoom for all faculty. To set up an account, go to https://tuskegee.zoom.us.

Dr. Ndi also reminded faculty that he and the Office of the Provost have been working closely in acquiring desktop computers. So far, only 20 faculty have responded, so if any faculty need a desktop, please let him know.

All attendees were strongly encouraged to invite other faculty to attend Senate meetings. Their input is needed if we are to move forward as a team.

In response to Dr. Jones post, “It’s vote day tomorrow”, Dr. Ndi reminded faculty to vote. Faculty were also encouraged to excuse any student from class requesting time to vote. Students should be able to exercise their right to vote, without penalty.
Adoption of Minutes
It was moved by Dr. Tilghman and seconded by Mr. Parham that the minutes of the October 5th, meeting be approved with the following corrections and additions. The motion carried. Dr. Nashar’s name was added as the person who asked the question about the members of the standing committees. Drs. Lynn Benson, April Jones, Moses Ntam, and Zahid Baig were added to the attendance sheet, and the misspelled names of Drs. Dibaba, Imafidon, Ortigoza, and Jafarinejad were corrected.

Committee Chair Reports

Academic Affairs Committee (Mrs. Mary Arrington, Chair) Ms. Arrington had class but emailed her report. The AAC met on October 14th and approved two proposals: The Department of Computer Science, Micro Credential in Cyber Security, a graduate certification program, and the Department of Material Science and Engineering, Non-Thesis Option in Material Science and Engineering. Dr. Ndi added that the committee has a new proposal from the College of Agriculture.

Academic Personnel Services Committee (Dr. Li Huang, Chair) Dr. Huang reported that the U-APSC membership is complete. The deadline for tenure and promotion packets is Thursday, November 5th. After the College Committees review the packets, then the U-APSC will begin their review process next semester.

Research and Graduate Studies Committee (Dr. Daniel Abugri, Chair) Dr. Abugri is still reaching out to Dr. Jelani, Dean of Graduate Studies to schedule a meeting date. The concerns expressed at the previous meeting remain unresolved. Dr. Abugri looks forward to having colleagues join the committee as they champion the goals of the University in becoming an R2 or R1 research institution. Dr. Ndi made a plea for faculty with an interest in research and graduate studies to join the committee and contact Dr. Abugri.

Continuing Education and Outreach Committee (Dr. Yvette Essounga, Chair) This committee met on Friday, October 29th at 9 a.m. In addition to the Chair, members present were Dr. Glotova, Mrs. Graham, and two new members, Dr. Jones, and Dr. Bender. The committee discussed many ideas for programs. Ms. Graham spoke with the principal at Tuskegee Institute Middle School (TIMS) who remains interested in working with the committee on their proposed program via Zoom. Ms. Graham will serve as the liaison between the committee and TIMS. The committee plans to execute at least one of their ideas next semester.
Grievance Committee (Mrs. Eunice Samuel, Chair)
The committee is now up to five members. Representation is still needed from CAENS, SONAH, TSAC, and COE. There were no grievances to report.

Instruction Committee (Dr. John Tilghman, Chair)
The committee met on October 26th at 6 p.m. Members worked on constructing a survey aided by Dr. Kellie Samuels who provided a sample of last semester’s survey. Once questions are edited, they will be uploaded and distributed to faculty online. The committee will meet again on Wednesday, November 4th with the goal of getting the survey to Dr. Samuels by Thursday, November 5th. November 10th or 11th is the target date for launching the survey.

Other Business/Discussion
(Note: Some questions and comments posted in the chat area are included)

Dr. Ndi opened the discussion stating that every year the Faculty Senate, Staff Senate and the Office of Provost present recognition awards to faculty and staff for their contributions to the University. The awards ceremony is scheduled for Friday, November 6th, at 3 p.m., via Zoom.

Teaching Award for Excellence in Online Teaching in Honor of Ms. Jacqueline McArthur
Dr. Gebhard proposed that the Faculty Senate establish a Teaching Award for Excellence in Online Teaching in honor of Ms. Jacqueline McArthur, given her extraordinary service to the University. She noted that Ms. McArthur was a tremendous support when we went online last semester. She remembers the initial resistance to online courses and Ms. McArthur was there in the very beginning. She was fundamentally responsible for getting online classes started here at the University. Dr. Ndi seconded the proposal and said that Ms. McArthur never relented and applauded her commitment and excellence. Dr. Fox and Dr. Tilghman both agreed and seconded the proposal. Dr. Tilghman shared his work experiences with Ms. McArthur and credited her for moving TU into the 21st century and for preparing us for online classes, particularly during this pandemic. Several faculty members commented on Ms. McArthur’s commitment and service to the University, and the senate unanimously agreed to move forward with the proposal. To provide more clarity to her proposal, Dr. Gebhard stated that what she has in mind is for this to be an annual award with Ms. McArthur’s name attached to it. Dr. Ndi asked that a sub-committee be formed to work out the details and bring it back to the Senate for final approval.

Dr. Quansah inquired about Ms. McArthur and the reason for her leaving. Dr. Ndi stated that he did not know the particulars, but based upon his understanding, she was given a termination letter. He cautioned members against speculation and suggested that we direct our focus on honoring her service. Dr. Tilghman went on to add that in his conversation with Brett Coppenger, the office of ODEOL will continue to exist and that the Office of the Provost is
looking for an Executive Director for ODEOL and hopes to fill the position by end of spring semester. This person would oversee online courses and training for faculty.

Mr. Parham wanted to know if those who made presentations, hosted workshops, and assisted faculty in preparing for online instruction during the onset of the pandemic be recognized, for example, Dr. Agi and Dr. Ntam. Dr. Esfandiary also suggested an award for teaching excellence in online teaching. In response, Dr. Ndi suggested that they join the sub-committee with Dr. Gebhard to address those questions and work out other details. Dr. Gebhard noted that while the contributions of the other presenters were valuable and commendations may be in order, Ms. McArthur’s service spanned over a decade. This subcommittee will be chaired by Dr. Gebhard and anyone interested in joining can email her at agebhard@tuskegee.edu.

**Classroom Security**

Another point of discussion was security in classrooms. Dr. Parham wanted to know what kinds of security measures are in place for violent situations that may occur in the classroom and can self-defense classes be offered to faculty. He went on to ask, what do you do in a situation where a student tries to attack a professor?

Dr. Quansah supported this issue but expressed his concerns about students who challenge grades after graduation. How do we protect faculty from situations like that? Dr. Jones indicated that in her contact with Chief Mardis, she was informed that officers are trained in crisis prevention intervention and de-escalation procedures. In addition, faculty in her department have keyed into their cell phones the number to campus security. She strongly recommends that provisions be put in place for faculty safety. Dr. Ndi shared the concerns and asked Dr. Jones to draft a letter to the Provost regarding this matter.

Additional recommendation from Dr. Jones included: Dean Tamika Harper as a good resource, installation of distress buttons in classrooms, and safety courses by campus police. She also emphasized the need for more health and wellness for student stressors. Drs. Glotova and Essounga supported the idea of self-defense classes or training.

**Challenging Grades**

Dr. Quansah again asked if there are any rules or policies in place when grades are challenged after a year or more has passed or after a student has graduated? There needs to be a clear way to protect faculty. Dr. Ndi agreed that things like this should be prevented from happening. He noted that in the College of Arts and Sciences there are policies in place for grade challenges. Faculty have academic freedom to evaluate a student, and based upon that student’s performance, give them the grade that they have earned. He suggested that Dr. Quansah take this to the dean of his college and if necessary, he would send a sample of the guidelines from his college to him.
Change in Meeting Time—December and January
Mrs. Samuel noted that the December and January meetings were occurring while students were out and asked if we should adjust our meeting times for the months of December and January. A vote was taken, and the majority agreed upon 4:00 p.m. as the meeting time for those months.

Incomplete Grades
Dr. Salau asked about the policies regarding incomplete grades. He has some students who have incompletes from last semester. Dr. Tilghman, Chair of the Instruction Committee responded that since the grade was given in the spring, the assignment is due by the first week in November, and that if the incomplete is not changed to a letter grade this week, then the student would have to be administered the grade that they earned. Dr. Gebhard stated that according to her department chair, they have until November 16th to get their students grades in. A question was asked about the minimum or maximum period a student has to complete the work. Dr. Tilghman explained that if an incomplete grade was given last semester spring 2020, a student has one full semester to do the work, meaning that the student would have to complete the work this November.

Dr. Ortigoza indicated that she has had to give many incomplete grades. After discussion with Dr. Bromfield, she was told that it was basically up to her, and an extension could go up to a year. However, if a student contacts her saying that more time is needed, she has given them that time.

Last Day of Class and Exam Schedule
Mr. Parham wanted to know the last day of class. Dr. Ndi responded that based on the previous calendar, the last day of class is Monday, November 16th. It was mentioned that the academic calendar has been removed from the web page and is currently being revised. Dr. Ndi asked Dr. Tilghman to circulate any updated calendar dates to the deans.

Dr. Tilghman wanted to know if the exam schedule would remain the same. It was determined that the exam schedule has not changed. Dr. Ndi reminded everyone that there is always a study day between when classes end, and exams begin. Since the exam schedule has already been published, what is probably being updated is the calendar for the spring semester, 2021.

Equipment Access
Dr. Ortigoza stated that she has had issues with students who did not have access to equipment. She wanted to know if funds are available this semester for students who do not have laptops, because they need them to take their exams. She indicated that when she inquired, she was told that the student was in quarantine and did not have a laptop.
This problem was echoed by Dr. Quansah who has a student that lives in another state and needs a certain software to fulfil the lab assignments. The request was forwarded to Dr. Scott’s office, but to no avail. As a result, the student has been unable to perform any of the lab work, which may result in an incomplete grade. Dr. Quansah stated that he eventually reached Dr. Scott and was told that the check had been issued. However, his concern is, of what use is it for a student to get the check at the end of the semester? He feels that the Faculty Senate may need to address this issue. Dr. Ndi suggested that the faculty senate not involve itself in the matters of this department. He explained that the President of Student Affairs is responsible for ensuring that student equipment needs are met, not the senate, and advised faculty to reach out to Dr. Scott’s office.

Dr. Ndi pointed out that students have access to computers in multiple areas on campus but prefer to stay in their rooms. He does not know if the University has the resources to provide each student with a laptop.

Dr. Jones wanted to know if laptops could be secured for faculty. Dr. Ndi indicated that the best at this point has been providing desktops, but perhaps with the incoming interim provost, they may be able to work on getting laptops at that time.

Dr. Jones posted that the library databases are now available.

With no other questions or matters arising, it was motioned by Mr. Parham and seconded by Dr. Tilghman that the meeting adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 7:31 p.m.

Submitted by Eunice A. Samuel
Executive Secretary
November 10, 2020
Attendees

Faculty Senate Meeting Monday, November 2, 2020

1. Abebe, Woubit
2. Abuguri, Daniel
3. Acker-Mills, Barbara
4. Baig, Zahid
5. Benson, Lynn
6. Bhuyan, Jay
7. Dibaba, Asseged
8. Esfandiyari, Esmaeil
9. Essounga, Yvette
10. Fagbodun, Sheritta
11. Fishkin, Benjamin
12. Fox, Jeffrey
13. Gebhard, Caroline
14. Glotova, Olga
15. Graham, Jo Ann
16. Huang, Li
17. Jafarinejad, Shahryar
18. Jones, April
19. Nashar, Toufic
20. Ndi, William
21. Ndoye, Mandoye
22. Ntam, Moses
23. Ortigoza, Marisol Alcantara
24. Parham, Charles
25. Perry, Ruby
26. Quansah, Joseph
27. Quarcoo, Franklin
28. Reid, James
29. Ross, Jennifer
30. Salau, Abdul
31. Samuel, Eunice
32. Tilghman, John
33. Whittington, Richard

Chair: Dr Bill F. Ndi
Vice Chair: Dr. Jay Bhuyan
Executive Secretary: Eunice A. Samuel