

Faculty Senate Meeting

November 5, 2024, 3:30 p.m.

In person in the BOARD OF TRUSTEES' Room with ZOOM link:

<https://fit.zoom.us/j/98187817280>

Senator Present:

Jordan Poole (Aeronautics), Tolga Turgut(Aeronautics), Shawn Scott (Aeronautics), Charles Bryant(Business), Donald Platt(APSS), Csaba Palotai(APSS), Marcus Hohlmann (APSS), Mehmet Kaya (BES), Vipuil Kishore(CCE), Alan Brown(CCE), Tom Eskridge (EECS), Nakin Suksawang(MCE), Hamidreza Najafi(MCE), Chiradeep Sen (MCE), Joo Young Park(MSE), William Arrasmith (MSE), Shibo Liu(MSE), Pallav Ray(OEMS), Joe Montelione (SAC), Anna Muenchrath (SAC), Robert Deacon (SAC), Wanfa Zhang (SAC), David Wilder(BA), Jessica Wildman(Psy), Marshall Jones(Psy), Patrick Converse(Psy),William Bowman(Library),

Senator Absent: Melissa Borgen (BES), Abram Walton (Business), Angel Otero (Business Online), Georgio Anagnostopoulos (EECS), Sidhartha Bhattacharyya (EECS), Madhur Tiwari (APSS), Robert Weaver (OEMS), Gary Zarillo (OEMS)

Proxies: None

Other attendees: John Nicklow, John Kiss, Munevver Mine Subasi, John Harris, Lisa Steelman, John Deaton, Kaylee Erdos, Tristan Fiedler, Rudi Wehmschulte, Jason Martin, Penny Vassar, Suzanne Kozaitis, Ted Richardson, Raymond Bonhomme, Mary Bonhomme, Mariana Juras, Nancy Garmer, Heidi Hatfield Edwards, Brian Lail, Nick Daher, Chelsea Carroll

Call to Order

Meeting starts at 3:30pm

Discussion and O&A with University Leadership

The President, Provost, and/or Deans will join the first portion (3:30 PM to 4:00 PM) of the meeting to discuss current University initiatives and answer any questions, fostering open dialogue to better understand faculty concerns. Faculty members who wish to ask questions anonymously can send them to their representatives or directly to Sen. Suksawang, who will ensure the confidentiality of their inquiries.

Key points from President Nicklow

Commencement Details

“Commencement is on December 14th, and General Sejba, the head of STARCOM (of the U.S. Space Force's Space Training and Readiness Command (STARCOM)) will be our speaker. His team is relocating to Patrick Space Force Base, which is a fantastic connection for us.”

Travel Policy

President Nicklow mentioned introducing a travel partner system with benefits, “We’re introducing a travel partner system. It’s optional but includes benefits like direct billing and cost savings. We expect the rollout in January for a cleaner start to the year.”

Research Incentives

"We currently run five different research incentive programs, but we spend more than we bring in through overhead [...] Faculty input is essential." President Nicklow emphasized working with the Research Council to develop a sustainable approach for these incentives.

Key points from Provost John Kiss

Research Infrastructure Development

- **Commitment to Proposal Development Support:** "We’re committed to enhancing proposal development support. Faculty should not have to spend excessive time on budgets or administrative tasks." He emphasized that simplifying the grant proposal process is a priority to allow faculty to focus on their research.
- **Engaging External Expertise:** "We’re bringing in Dr. Terry Shelton, an external consultant, in January to help us assess our infrastructure." Dr. Shelton has extensive experience in increasing research capacity and infrastructure. Her role will include evaluating existing systems and providing recommendations to strengthen faculty success in securing external funding.

Q&A Highlights:

1. **Winter Break Lab Access:**
President Nicklow: “Security confirmed that labs aren’t locked during breaks unless it’s a departmental policy issue. Let us know if specific access concerns arise.”
2. **Summer Course Planning:**
Provost Kiss: “Proactive planning is key. Departments should focus on offering courses likely to fill. We’re exploring flexible modalities to meet student needs.”
3. Question raised by Sen. Jones: “Can faculty still benefit from the travel partner savings if we’re self-funding part or all of our trip?”
Response by President Nicklow : “We’ll explore the logistics, but there’s no reason why you shouldn’t have access to those benefits even if self-funding.”

Approval of Minutes (September 2024 meeting):

- Motion to approve the revised minutes, moved by Sen. Marshall and Seconded by Sen. Brown.

Voting Results:

- Yes: 32

- No: 0
- Abstain: 0

Outcome: Motion passed (September 2024 Meeting minutes approved).

Reports

Senate President's Report (Sen. Suksawang)

Research Expenditures and Endowment

- “Research expenditures are steady at about \$16 million annually.
- “The university’s endowment figure is noted as around \$1 million, with acknowledgment that a \$75 million fundraising campaign is planned over the next 5-6 years.”

Board of Trustees and NSF C-Star Project

- The updates shared at the Board of Trustees meeting align with the President’s remarks, highlighting steady enrollment growth, research expansion, and strategic initiatives, including the NSF C-Star project.

Committee Reports

Academic Policies (Sen. Kishore): The committee has one item under New Business regarding doctoral policies

Administrative Policies (Sen. Kaya): The ad hoc committee on appointment letters and intellectual property is progressing. There’s consensus on removing annual letters for tenured faculty starting next year.

Sen. Jones commented: “It’s odd that tenured faculty still receive annual letters. Good to see this being addressed.”

Excellence Awards (Sen. Wildman): The new Faculty Excellence Awards webpage is live. Details for nominations will follow in December.

Scholarships (Open Position): No report.

Technology Resources and Infrastructure (Sen. Poole): No meeting was held due to the hurricane and fall break.

Welfare (Sen. Jones): We’re examining summer contract deadlines, instructor promotion paths, and faculty-student behavioral concerns. Progress updates will be shared next month.

Sen. Turgut commented: “Promotion pathways for instructors fall under Administrative Policies. Let’s ensure committees stick to their scopes.”

Sen. Jones responded: “Understood. If Administrative Policies leads this, we’re happy to collaborate.”

Old Business

1. AFTC Charter Updates

A request to change AFTC Charter under FH 1.4 (See the attached proposed bylaw)

AFTC met on August 15 and voted Dr. Robert van Woesik as new Chair.

The AFTC also approved amendments to its charter under FH 1.4 Bylaws, aligning with President Nicklow's request to route AFTC recommendations to the Provost and President through the Faculty Senate President (see attached charter changes).

- Motion by Sen. Turgut to *table the motion to approve amendments to the AFTC Charter under FH 1.4, aligning recommendations with routing changes*. Seconded by Sen. Jones

Voting Results:

- Yes: 20
- No: 0
- Abstain: 2

Outcome: Tabled it. (The senate will invite the AFTC chair to the next meeting)

2. Faculty Library Committee Dissolution

A resolution to retire the faculty library committee under FH 1.5.1 (see attached resolution)

- *Motion to retire the Faculty Library Committee under FH 1.5.1 due to inactivity:*
Motion by Sen. Bowman and Seconded by: Sen. Kaya

Voting Results:

- Yes: 28
- No: 1
- Abstain: 3

Outcome: Motion passed.

New Business

Graduate Policy (2.6.2) Discussion: Dissertation Registration

(Graduate Policy 2.6.2)

The doctoral student who has been admitted to candidacy must normally register **each academic term** thereafter for at least three semester credit hours of dissertation throughout the remainder of his or her program. A written waiver of **the requirement for continuous registration** **is** required and is granted only if the student is not making use of university facilities or personnel. Such waivers must be approved in advance by the major advisor and academic unit head. The waiver must then be forwarded to the Office of Graduate Programs.

All doctoral dissertation credits will bear the numerical designation 6999, preceded by the three-letter program designator.

Students may register for fewer than three semester credits of dissertation in the semester of graduation only. (See graduate policy “Thesis/Design Project/Dissertation Registration in the Semester of Graduation” for limitations).

Key details from the discussion

- **Overview of the Policy Change:** Sen. Kishore introduced the topic and emphasized the need to clarify continuous registration requirements for doctoral students during summer sessions, proposing the inclusion of a "doctoral summer session course" as an option. This course allows students to register for zero credits and maintain access to campus facilities while continuing their research.
- **Concerns and Historical Context:** Sen. Kishore explained that previously, students unable to register for credits during the summer faced challenges such as being barred from campus or halting research progress. The proposed zero-credit course addresses these issues and ensures students remain officially registered.
- The course was initially implemented as a temporary solution by a prior Provost and has been in effect for the past two summers, though it is not yet widely known.

Details About the Course:

- The course is currently referred to as “doctoral summer session” or coded as ASC1 in the catalog. It provides liability coverage for students using campus resources and working on research during summer.

Discussion on the extension to Master's Students: Some senators proposed extending the zero-credit option to master’s students, arguing they face similar challenges. However, it was noted that the current discussion and policy focus are limited to doctoral students.

Policy Language Updates: It was acknowledged that the language in the existing policy (requiring a minimum of three credit hours for continuous registration) must be updated to reflect the zero-credit option.

Next Steps: The Academic Policies Committee plans to draft a formal proposal to include this course officially in the graduate policy document. This draft will be reviewed and potentially voted on in the next Senate meeting

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by Sen. Brown and seconded by Sen. Bowman.
Meeting adjourned at 4:47pm.

Next MEETING Tuesday, December 3, 2024, 3:30-5:00 p.m. in Board Conference Room

Respectfully,
Senate Secretary, Jooyoung Park

Passed Resolution to retire 1.5.1, Faculty Library Committee

Whereas, it is necessary to align faculty senate policies with the practices that have been in place during the SACSCOC accreditation cycle;

Whereas, the Faculty Library Committee has not met within the past 5 academic years; and

Whereas, the subject librarians provide an avenue by which the library can more effectively disseminate information about library issues and events relevant to the departments and receive departmental information relevant to the library; therefore be it

Resolved, that section 1.5.1 Library Committee be struck from the Faculty Handbook.