**West Virginia State University**

**Faculty Senate Meeting**

**Friday, September 6, 2024**

**Attending online:** J. Barnes-Pietruszynski, P. Carney, A. Bejou, S. Burdette, M. Bradley, S. Bandara, M. Harris, M. Casey, A. Settle, B. Liedl, D. Taylor, E. Waugh, E. Lomax, G. Lee, J. Brunetti, L. Wang-Hiles, M. Ranasinghe, M. Sizemore, P. King, S. Woodard

**Attending in person:** K. Steele, M. Pennington, R. Wallace, D. Williams, A. Dorsey, B. Ladner, K. Toledo, S. Joiner, M. Fultz, L. Lambert, J. Pietruszynski, T. Kiddie, M. Wilson, S. Malkaram, M. Anderson, E. Mahmoud, N. Zaman

**Agenda**

Called to order at 1:33 pm

1. Approve Minutes of May 3, 2024 Meeting T. Kiddie moved approval; L. Lambert seconded – changes email to Barbara Ladner or LeighAnn Davidson by end of next week.

**Reports and Announcements**

1. Administration/Academic Affairs

a. President Ericke Cage   
President Cage thanked the faculty for what they do, emphasizing that they are very much part of future of WVSU.  
He discussed priorities for this academic year: 1) getting ready for reaffirmation of accreditation, which is “mission critical”; the Provost and Dean Steele working on it; 2) implementation of strategic plan, not just words on a shelf; he asked people to familiarize themselves with the five pillars; the Future State Committee is involved in making recommendations and is working with a consultant from a national university business officers organization (NCUBO); 3) capital campaign is in quiet phase with capital campaign executive committee Tom Hayden & Ed Gange, as co-chairs; WVSU is working to raise $25 million over next five years and has already raised $9 million; 4) he said that registration/enrollment are trending in right direction, but ‘drop’ (for non-payment) is coming up and many students have proof of attendance (POA) and financial issues. We might be able to assist those whose issues are financial issues. The academic affairs office is trying to get all POA reports for week 4 (90% of faculty submitted for week 1) and follow up on students who have one, versus many, Qs; 5) MU got a cybersecurity grant for their center, and we will be partnering with them (and WVU), working toward a cybersecurity major; he said that it is important to be leader, and field is important to the future of the university. In response to question, President said that the current strategic plan consultant is not the same as the consultant at the cabinet retreat this summer. The person at the retreat led an institution in danger of insolvency and made drastic changes, cuts, but the current consultant is different.

b. Provost Deborah Williams reported that an AI policy committee has been created so we can have a university policy to build on in our disciplines. Criterion committees (for reaffirmation of accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association) are meeting; she asked that everyone please comply if asked for information. She also urged those who have not completed Title IX training to please do so ASAP. The Monday drop date was selected because it is better for online courses (who often have Sunday night due dates). She emphasized how faculty should do their best to make this a student-centered environment while maintaining academic standards. She reported that spring schedules are being created early so that they can be looked at from the whole institution’s perspective before releasing them to students. Associate Provost Micheal Fultz asked whether the university excused absences (athletics and sickness) are getting out to faculty soon enough or are there any problems? He asked for faculty to please try to work with students and reminded instructors that course policies must be consistent the University BOG policy. The reason for the University policy (and Mike’s work on this is) that students sometimes have a serious issue and it saves them having to go to each faculty member (e.g., in the event of a parent’s death).

2. BOG Faculty Representative Jeffrey Pietruszynski reported that the BOG met September 5, 2024. The BOG has shown a lot of interest in reaffirmation, much more than previous BOGs in Jeff’s observation. The BOG took a deferred maintenance tour of complete projects, but did not look at places still in need. They made a surprise visit to student success facilities. Dean Wallace asked about the schedule for consultant activities. Jeff reported that all BOG was told was that it is supposed to get a report in February. Jeff does not know how much we are paying the consultant(s). He also emphasized that faculty need to complete Title IX training, please. M. Wilson moved and L. Lambert seconded approval.

3. ACF Representative Barbara Ladner had no report except that the ACF retreat is in early November. L. Lambert moved and M. Wilson seconded approval of the report.

4. General Education Coordinator reported that the committee met once in Fall 2023 to ask departments to gather and discuss GE assessment data from the courses they offer. The committee met virtually in Spring 2024 to consider a proposal to make SWK 131 count for GE Social Science, which the committee recommended to EPC. L. Lambert moved and M. Wilson seconded approval of the report.

5. Faculty Senate Chair (FSC) Davidson reported that the Faculty Scholarship is being assisted by Anne McConnell (former chair) is helping with getting lists of eligible students to send deans, who will send back nominations.

**Old Business**

1. Focus of the Senate – 2023-24 FSC Davidson asked for any who are interested in any of these committees/activities to please let her know. A conideration for all committees is ongoing issues with whether people on committees are actually doing work on the committees where they ‘serve.’

* + 1. Restructure Committees/Updates to Constitution & By-Laws
       1. Academic Appeals & Faculty Grievance – Only one person on campus is trained on the Faculty Grievance Committee to hear a grievance, so the committee cannot hear grievance. One idea is to combine it with academic appeals. Ladner stated that we should get rid of the Faculty Grievance Committee; FSC Davidson said that the Executive Committee would look into appropriate language to do that, which could be brought to the Senate (and faculty, if needed – many people have had difficulty accessing the FS Constitution and By-Laws on the revised website).  
          Ladner asked whether Academic Appeals requires training and whether students know that appeal to the committee is an option. FSC Davidson will look into what student affairs says about the appeals process, since right now the form goes straight from the dean to the provost. The form needs to be fixed to reflect that option, since the option is in the catalog. Students need to be directed to catalog and student handbook and the form needs to reflect that students needs to use that whole process (currently, many students are going straight to the Provost, instead of instructor, then - if not satisfied with the decision at any stage – chair, then dean, then Academic Appeals Committee).
    2. IT Committee– the Instructional Classroom Technology Survey has been completed, and the information is being directed to Eric Jackson (who is over IT) and Justin.  
       Related to IT: The ‘relocation directory’ has been drafted by Vonda Matthews, in Academic Affairs, and Academic Affairs will finish building it out and make it available.
    3. Ad-Hoc Committees – Faculty Grant Compensation; Academic Integrity/AI (will join with what Academic Affairs is doing); Dean Pennington will lead revision Faculty Evaluation Instrument revision is (especially Research Section) with any faculty who are interested; LeighAnn will send out email asking for interest in specific committees. Deans Zaman and Steele noted a policy on faculty grant compensation was drafted before COVID and needs to move forward.
    4. Faculty Lecture Series 2024-25 –J. Barnes-Pietruszynski is sending out an email requesting proposas for Topics; the early presentations this semester will be from proposals accepted for Spring 2024.
    5. Website issues include finding Facility Services – FSC Davidson has sent out the correct link, in case faculty members can’t find it. Be sure to report issues with website, too. The final exam schedule, which was out of date, should be correct now.  
       Updates on deferred maintenance list are being made; Send any other issues to FSC Davidson; there is a Deferred Maintenance Website Link for updates: <https://sites.google.com/wvstateu.edu/wvsudeferredmaintenance/home>

1. Promotion & Tenure/Retention – Now those applying should submit ALL-Electronic Portfolios – no paper; previous P&T and Retention committees set up documents to guide faculty in submitting. FSC Davidson will send out a list of committee members so that people can reach out to them. Several people commented that the document on how to ePortfolios should be submitted should be included in Faculty Handbook in its next iteration.
2. OER Grants – The deadline is September 20, 2024 for a new round of grants, including a new category, Bridge OER grants to help with courses that don’t currently have a lot of OER resources. Engineering, Communications & Media, Computer Science, and Criminal Justice. This new category allows two years for planning.

**New Business**

1. Faculty Senate Elections
   1. Retention Committee – no one on committee wants to be chair, but many options involve making the same people who already do most of the work step up. Not that many new faculty or new tenure-track people. Most people here are already doing a lot of work. Faculty members need it, and it’s a legal responsibility of the faculty/University which must be completed on time. Dean Wallace noted that the Retention Committee hasn’t been dealing with 3rd year reviews. T. Kiddie observed that the faculty/Faculty Senate doesn’t find out when people leave. Ladner suggested that Academc Affairs or HR should regularly notify the FS chair and deans council which faculty members have left at the beginning of each academic year.
2. Cybersecurity – Dean Zaman and Ali presented information about a proposal to obtain ‘permission to plan’ a BS Degree in cybersecurity. Dean Zaman said that information must be reported to HEPC, including the program’s relationship to the University mission, external need, financial issues, etc. The proposed program will have special features, including a focus on critical infrasatructure for cybersecurity, in addition to WVSU’s status as a land grant institution and HBCU. Documents to be submitted include major components of curriculum and information about student interest (many students ask about cybersecurity at NSOs, and Dr. Ali did survey of student interest and potential benefit. The Google grant already obtained means program won’t need a lot of financial resources for the first three years. Dean Zaman also expects that there will be lots of resources from companies and agencies in the area. The faculty senate does not need to approve, but the information is being provided so people know what’s going on. NSM has approved, so now it goes to Provost, and then to HEPC. The intention is to send it ASAP to ‘start the clock’ on the planning/approval process. NSM hopes to start the program in fall 2024, but it has to go through both HEPC and HLC. Dean Pennington asked about our confidence that we can get the resources we need, including attracting good candidates for faculty positions. Dean Zaman acknowledged that Dr. Woo left, but we have other very good faculty now. Dean Zaman would like multiple departments develop courses with cybersecurity applications. Dean Steele noted that the proposal will need to expand on why OUR program is needed and how we will be able to compete. FSC Davidson noted we could emphasize our Criminal Justice links and homeland security aspects. Dr. Ali emphasized that our focus is on critical infrastructure, which other programs in WV do not have. Dean Steele emphasized that we need to elaborate, and Dr. Anderson said that it needs to be spelled out much more clearly the specific things we are doing that are different for the non-technical people on HEPC, so the proposal might need to restore some statements that have been removed for stylistic or conciseness reasons.
3. FSC Davidson reported on the Future State Committee (where she is a member). The committee (L. Davidson, D. Williams, A. Faucett, L. Young, A. Smith, M. Akers, J. McAllister) has met only once. Williams and McAllister are co-chairs. FSC Davidson and Provost Williams said that the process needs to be transparent. There will be listening sessions and interviews. FSC Davidson asked those who are consulted to be sure to tell those interviewing what they think the committee needs to hear and/or email concerns/questions/information to FSC Davidson, who will convey it to the committee anonymously. Anyone can send her comments. A faculty member noted that here are a lot of rumors flying around and urged the President to address whether decisions have already been made. FSC Davidson will ask President Cage to address ‘rumors or fact.’ She said that not all interview have been set yet. Another faculty member asked how much the consultant costs and whether it is worth the cost. FSC Davidson emphasized that she will be speaking on behalf of anything faculty members want to have said. Provost Williams said that the committee has to evaluate the whole operation, not just individual units. Someone asked what transparency means in this process. A communication plan to get information out as quickly as possible is being developed. FSC Davidson said that she told the committee that the faculty would be p\*\*\*\*\* if the process isn’t transparent.

Adjourned at 3:16 pm L. Lambert moved and T. Kiddie seconded a motion to adjourn.