

Minutes

Faculty Council 3 April 2025

256 BSC at 3:30pm

Voting Participants: Brian Downes, Jennifer Korte, Ellen Carnaghan, Stephanie Tennill, Elena Bray Speth, Mark Ruff, Melinda McPherson, Rachel Greenwald Smith, Elizabeth Block, Melissa Ochoa, Bukky Gbadegesin, Emily Hite, Brenda Kirchoff, Kim Powlishta, Ruth Warner, Flannery Burke, Sarah Bauer, Andre Zampaulo, Anneke Bart, Scott Ragland, Ben England, Ruben Rosario-Rodriguez

Non-Voting Participants: Robert Hughes, Silvana Siddali, Hisako Matsuo, Max Lyon, Brian Yothers, Maryse Jayasuriya, Daniel Smith, Scott Harris, Donna LaVoie, Katrina Moore, Gary Barker, Laurie Russell, Dan Kozlowski, Jen Popiel

AGENDA

1. Welcome & Greetings
 - a. We will be having the deans depart after the CAS committee reports. We are attempting this as a new approach to faculty discussion.
2. CAS Dean's Report ([slides linked here](#))
 - a. Enrollment numbers: we have 1790 undergraduates and 400 graduate students (potentially; numbers need to be verified). In terms of new students, we have an increasing number of committed students for this fall; we are on track for higher enrollment this fall compared to fall 2024. We are doing well, historically, compared to past enrollments. We may end up topping our projections for this fall.
 - b. In terms of development: you can see the numbers in the dean's slides linked above, but we are bringing in scholarship money. This is not cash on hand, but is reserved for student scholarships. One of my jobs as dean is to procure money for student scholarships and endowed faculty lines; we're having success here. Question: how do student scholarships work? Response: some of them are managed by student financial services; the college itself just controls two. We have not seen a report. But we will ask for one from student financial services.
 - c. Reminder: town hall next Thursday from 11-12:30 (April 10). It will be at 11am in A-B Auditorium in Cook Hall. There is a budget deficit that needs to be addressed, so it may not be all good news. Please try to attend; there will be some important information there about plans to address this budget shortfall.
3. Query from UCC about old CAS core attributes
 - a. [See the motion from the UCC here](#). Some new course requests have some old attributes from the old core selected; this adds a layer of paperwork that can be avoided. This fall, virtually every student will be on the new core.

- b. Question: will CourseLeaf be automatically updated? Response from associate dean: I'll need to ask the registrar. We may be able to hide the old core attributes in CourseLeaf.
 - c. Motion passes.
- 4. Discussion of Colleague Letters for Dossiers (Brian Downes)
 - a. [See slides here](#). Rank, Tenure, and Sabbatical (RTS) is seeking feedback on the value of required colleague letters that go in the dossiers. Certainly some departments could require them, but the question is should the college drop them.
 - b. This came about because the pool of available colleagues to review dossiers and compose letters is limited. It is not clear at this point as to whether UCART even reviews these letters; further, it is not explicitly required by the faculty manual. It is also not required by the standardized cover sheet that travels with the dossier.
 - c. There is a cost/benefit question as to whether this process is worth it. Collegiality cannot be a standard for review; letters are not allowed to address this. Little is added by the letters that is not addressed elsewhere.
 - d. We hope to bring a seconded motion at our next meeting.
 - e. Comment: I like this idea, but colleague letters may be able to address peer review of teaching. Otherwise it may be difficult to assess teaching. Response: we do assess teaching through the appendix and other components of the dossier.
 - f. Remember that if people write letters, they state their opinion in writing and then cannot vote. For small departments, this may mean that one person left voting is no longer anonymous.
 - g. Question: Could we have notes that talk about someone's teaching or mentoring, but not have that note serve as a formal letter? Response: there are many parts of the dossier where those comments could be placed, which I think would be smoother than it is currently.
 - h. Question: but if the home department has places where peer review of teaching is the norm, can I go above and beyond in commenting on that without sacrificing my right to vote for promotion? Response: to be determined, but it is something we will add to our discussion. There are ways to comment on the work of faculty without writing formal letters.
 - i. Email Brian Downes (brian.downes@slu.edu) with further comments about this proposed policy change.

5. CAS Committee Reports:

- a. Faculty Advisory Committee
 - 1. No report.
- b. Graduate Curriculum Committee
 - 1. [See motion here.](#)
 - 2. Motion is on the floor; motion passes.
- c. Nominations Committee
 - 1. No report.
- d. Rank, Tenure, and Sabbatical Committee
 - 1. No report.
- e. Undergraduate Curriculum Committee
 - 1. [See motion here.](#)
 - 2. Motion is on the floor; motion passes.
- f. DEI Committee
 - 1. No report.

---Deans depart at 4:15 PM---

6. Teaching Effectiveness Project (TEP)

- a. [See slides here about the TEP.](#)
- b. This work formally started in fall 2023, but the desire and need for change were in motion long before then. We need to have an equitable and consistent process for evaluating teaching effectiveness across the university.
- c. In the spring of 2024, we assembled pools of teaching advocates and equity advocates. We also assembled the project team for phase 1 of the project. There was a call for inventories of teaching effectiveness from faculty, staff, students, and administrators. All that data became backdrop and fodder for forming a framework this school year.
- d. This past fall (2024), the phase 1 project team developed several prototype frameworks based on data and literature; after soliciting feedback, we produced a penultimate draft, on which we are currently seeking feedback.
- e. The current framework, seen in the slides linked above, has three dimensions: effective teachers are learning-focused, mission-aligned, and growth-oriented. We hope to capture overarching practices that can capture all sorts of examples of effective teaching. These dimensions each have a list of essential practices along

with representative behaviors. Baseline foundational practices are also taken directly from the faculty manual. Our website also has a graphical representation, a glossary, and a list of references.

- f. Question: will this impact student evaluations? Response: Eventually in a future phase, but we are putting a stake in the ground for what we feel makes effective teachers here at SLU. This proposed framework is not the rubric, but we will use the framework to inform a future rubric. There will be disciplinary customization involved in that.
- g. Question/Comment: I think all departments/units are supposed to collect some of this information each year in terms of what students are learning. How much has this process drawn from those existing tools? Response: This is not to be used for a programmatic assessment; this is at the instructor level. This framework should not conflict with that work; this is about how an instructor engages in their teaching over time. This framework goes beyond learning outcomes. Further comment: if a course is meeting a programmatic need, that is some of how we assess whether a course is learning-focused. Response: the current system is not limited to certain disciplines. The language we use here is transcendent of departments.
- h. Comment: I assume this will somehow be incorporated into rank and tenure dossiers. Response: we are currently in phase 1, meaning we need to agree on a framework. We need to agree as an institution on how we need to evaluate teaching. Then we can move toward further implications. One of the goals is to triangulate data to diminish the inherit bias present in any one data source.
- i. Question: this seems like something that may need to be evaluated over time. How may this be dealt with in annual evaluations? Response: well in the annual conversation with your chair, you can have a conversation about one or two items you want to work on. It is not the expectation that an instructor does all these things on the list all the time.
- j. Comment: when chairs look at teaching reports, we tend to look for red flags only. I would like to suggest that this does not add bureaucracy and would instead allow us to intervene when needed. Response: the student surveys let us know about the student experience in the classroom, but they do not tell us anything about whether students are actually learning. Which is one reason we do not simply want to rely on these moving forward. This is the benefit of triangulation. In terms of bureaucracy, the amount of work anticipated is dependent on a future phase, and may be at the departmental level to an extent. If there is more work, it will be meaningful.
- k. Provide feedback via the [feedback form](#).

----4:45pm----

7. University Committee Reports:

- a. Faculty Senate
 - 1. No report
- b. UUCC
 - 1. No report
- c. UCART
 - 1. No report
- d. GAAC
 - 1. No report
- e. UAAC
 - 1. No report
- f. GEAR
 - 1. The task force has performed a survey of themes from nearly half a dozen universities. Moving forward, we will have listening sessions with a variety of stakeholders from graduate students up to chairs and administrators. There have been emails from April Trees regarding these sessions.
- g. Academic Program Review Council
 - 1. No report
- h. Library Advisory Committee
 - 1. No report

8. New Business

- a. AAUP will meet Monday, April 28; [see flyer here](#). These meetings are limited to one hour.
- b. Concerns from CAS Faculty to Provost
 - 1. [There is a list of eight summative points](#) of concern from the CAS faculty to the provost. These were read aloud during the FC meeting.
 - 2. We encourage strong attendance at the town hall scheduled for 11am on Thursday, April 10 at 11am in A-B Auditorium of Cook Hall, or via [Zoom](#).

Adjourn at 5:33pm.