

**Georgia Southwestern State University**  
**Faculty Senate**

Thursday, November 30, 2023 at 4:00 p.m.

GSW Nursing Building, Room 106

**Minutes: Approved February 19, 2024**

**Members in Attendance (12):** John LeJeune (President), Amber Stovall (Vice-President), Ashley Jones (Secretary), Ian Brown, Sisi Chen, Michael Crosby, Michelle Dykes, Chadwick Gugg, Anne Jacobs, Sondra Smith, Anh-Hue Tu, Keaton Wynn

**Ex-officio Members in Attendance (1):** Provost Jill Drake

**1. Call to Order:** John LeJeune called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m.

**a) Approval of Agenda:** Ashley Jones requested to add Senate Discussion Item E Mental Health Response Training. John LeJeune motioned to approved the agenda with that change, seconded by Sondra Smith, and approved unanimously.

**2. Approval of Minutes**

**a) October 25, 2023:** John LeJeune motions to approve the minutes, seconded by Amber Stovall, and approved unanimously, except for abstentions by Michael Crosby, Michelle Dykes and, An-Hue Tu)

**3. Senate Activity Updates**

**a) AI and Ethics Follow-up:** John LeJeune reached out to Gary Fisk about AI training and the ethics of AI use. From this correspondence, it was suggested to ensure there is a training of some sort on AI ethics and AI in general at the next Southwestern week, and to have that training informed by a list of questions relevant to faculty. Such questions will be gathered first by the Faculty Senate, then forwarded to Faculty Affairs, and then to Gary Fisk or the assigned presenters.

**b) USG Faculty Council Report:** John LeJeune attended the October 10/26 meeting of the USG Faculty Council at Gordon State. There was a lot of discussion of Core IMPACTS as a rebranding effort. Additional reasons for IMPACTS was to enable easy transfer of credits. The Chancellor expressed intent to advocate for tuition increases, and agreed to make a statement on political vs. hate speech on USG campuses.

**c) Library Senate Vacancy:** The Library had no person to fill John Wilson's vacant seat, so the seat will reman vacant. The Senate, in its ByLaws revision process, will need to figure out what to do with that seat in the long-term.

**d) Meeting Regarding In-House Math Test:** There was a meeting this morning (Nov. 30, 2023) regarding the university response to having no SAT/ACT requirements. Those attending included Dr. Jill Drake, Chadwick Gugg, Stephanie Harvey, and David Jenkins, among others. The topic was the creation of an in-house math placement test.

Chadwick Gugg reported on the meeting: High School GPA is currently the main factor to determine placement in math and science. Our tentative plan is as follows: the Math Department will create an in-house test to allow placement into higher-level math courses. Students will place into lower levels by default; but if student wants to enroll in higher levels, they must opt in to take the placement test for higher level math courses. April 1<sup>st</sup> target date. Storm Days, Orientation

**e) GSW Town Hall – Senate Role:** Statement from John Lejeune: Appreciation of Dr. Weaver for involvement in the decision-making of potential re-organization. Embrace the opportunity in good faith and with open-mindedness. Make a compelling argument based on robust evidence. We have until March 15<sup>th</sup>.

**4. Public Address (5 minutes each; not to exceed 20 minutes):** Three GSW Faculty members spoke at Public Address

**1. Gary Fisk (Psychology):** Dr. Fisk described a strong sense of Deja-vu with A&S restructuring in 2006/2007. Past re-structuring did not go well. Problems noted: Goals were unclear in terms of why we were restructuring and what we sought to accomplish. There was little sense of efficiency, and often confusion about who is responsible for what. Newly created divisions didn't really function. Recommendations: Define clearly what the goals and benefits are to the task-to simply say that we must be "more efficient" is too vague; Have realistic expectations for what we will accomplish; Emphasize honesty and directness with respect to expectations and goals—dishonesty only makes things worse; Study and learn from past examples here and at other institutions that have done this.

**2. Sam Peavy (Geology):** Building on Dr. Fisk's stated concerns, Dr. Peavy discussed how during the prior reorganization "academic coordinators" often did tasks typically assigned to chairs but without payment. Dr. Peavy also discussed how, as educators, we try to prepare our students to enter the world, and in order to do that, we have to prepare our students for flexibility and change. Part of that is learning from a variety of disciplines, which helps you do your job better. Embracing variety is critical because we are preparing students for jobs they can't even imagine. So whatever reorganization we do, our mission needs to be the same – prepare students to be the best they can be in the rapidly changing world they will inherit.

**3. Michael Moir (English):** Dr. Moir raised the question with regard to restructuring: How are accreditors going to react to anything we want to do? Dr. Moir also discussed Low Performing Programs in this context – if one goal is to protect low producing programs, we need to fight data with data. (Handout with stats on humanities programs). Liberal arts graduates earn money. To spread this information, we might leverage alumni networks; talk to HS counselors and counter some of the dead-end degree narratives. We might also consider alternatives, like core-education prison programs, or programs with local seniors.

## 5. University Updates and Q+A

### a) President Dr. Neal Weaver (not in attendance)

### b) Provost Dr. Jill Drake

- Approaching with an open-mind to possible restructuring.
- Did get report back from SACS (17 examples of non-compliance). Dr. Davis is in the process of responding to these for the March on-campus visit. Primary issue: documentation. 3 related to budget.
- Low producing (LP) programs: was a topic at RAC meetings. GSW not the only institution with high number of LP programs. Will be meeting with board on Feb. 14<sup>th</sup> about absorbing budget cut and LP programs.
- Extra compensation: we're losing faculty to industry due to inadequate pay. Will be reviewing.
- USG watching teaching modalities for all courses.
- USG asked for survey to adult learners about why they dropped out.
- Carnegie Classifications are changing.
- SGA President: Proclamation about being intentional on DEI/Inclusivity/Anti-Bias training.
- We're exploring giving students software to pre-look at plagiarism issues before submitting an assignment.
- New program in Sciences; Project Management

### Questions

- What will happen if we don't address LP programs?*
  - Unsure; Need to have a plan for improvement or termination
- How do you classify low producing program?*
  - By program completers – under 10 graduates for undergraduate, 3 year average.
- Are Evaluations for Faculty going to be more strict as a matter of policy? Are Deans/Chairs mandated to reduce the number of 5's given to faculty, as some have been told?*

-Evaluation inflation is an active concern of USG. There were no direct orders from the Provost to the Deans mandating, for example, 4s where there used to be 5s. At the same time, the Deans know that ratings are going to be looked at by USG.

## 6. Senate Discussion Items / Action Items

**a) GSW Town Hall – Academic Unit Reorganization:** As a result of the recent Town Hall, Dr. Drake and Dr. LeJeune will be co-chairing a committee to explore possible academic reorganization.

**i. Establishing a feedback process:** Dr. LeJeune discussed that the first step in this process will be to establish committee membership on the Task Force. A discussion proceeded about Senate recommendations in this regard. Some concern was expressed about clearly defining the goal. Generally speaking, the following were recommended by the Senate:

- Institutional Research personnel, 4 Deans, at least 1 Faculty Senate rep from each college
- Call for volunteers, send email to John.

### **b) Faculty Senate Survey – Subcommittee Reports and Agenda Setting**

**i. Establish priorities and action plan from subcommittee reports:** The Senate engaged in a subcommittee-by-subcommittee discussion of the results from the Faculty Senate Survey. Several action stems were recommended: SEE APPENDIX A for a summary of the action steps.

### **c) GSW Midterm and Withdrawal Policy**

**i. Discussion of Data and Forwarding to Committees:** John LeJeune will collect research information on Midterm and Withdrawal policies and send to Academic Affairs for review.

### **d) Looking ahead – Agenda items for the Spring**

**-Subcommittee websites:** We will start in earnest to pursue all Faculty Senate Committees having a website with basic information – members, agendas, minutes, charge, etc.

**-Subcommittee to revise bylaws:** In spring 2024 the Faculty Senate will create a subcommittee for reexamining the existing Senate Bylaws. It will focus on aligning the Bylaws with USG policy, clarifying ambiguities, addressing issues not sufficiently covered in the Bylaws (e.g. when new officers take over for old ones), and aligning with structural changes at GSW (e.g. no more library school).

### **e) Mental health Response Training**

-Paula Bryant has offered to provide this training to faculty. Faculty Senate would like to sponsor the event and show support by participating. Ashley Jones will contact Paula Bryant and Jill Drake to set up as a Teaching Circle

## **7. Committee Recommendations**

### **a) Academic Affairs**

- i.** New Minor: Business – Project Management Minor
- ii.** New Major: Business – Human Resource Management
- iii.** New Minor: Business – Human Resource Management
- iv.** Curriculum Change: Sociology - Area F Change (Adding SOCI 2101)
- v.** New Program: Certificate in Financial Technology
- vi.** New Program: Certificate in Wildlife Biology

-John LeJeune motioned to approve i-vi as block with ii and iii to be adjusted from “New Major” and “New Minor” to “Curriculum Change”; seconded Anne Jacobs, and approved unanimously.

### **b) Graduate Affairs Committee**

- i.** Graduate Faculty Status Application – Dr. Alaina Kaus
- ii.** New Program: Nursing – Post MSN FNP Certificate
- iii.** Curriculum Change – MSN Nursing Informatics Track
- iv.** Curriculum Change – MSN Nursing Education Track
- v.** Curriculum Change – MSN Nursing Leadership Track
- vi.** Deactivation – Executive MBA

-John LeJeune motioned to approve i-vi as block, seconded by Chadwick Gugg, and approved unanimously.

## **8. Additional Concerns - None**

## **9. Announcements - Academic Bowl- Contact Sam Peavy**

## **10. Adjourn**

-Michael Crosby motioned to Adjourn, seconded by Keaton Wynn, and approved unanimously. Adjourned at 6:26 p.m.

**APPENDIX A: Faculty Senate Survey Results**

Subcommittee Issue Recommendation	Additional work by Senate Subcommittee?	Send to Faculty Senate Committee?	Other Comments or Actions
<p><b>Administration 1:</b></p> <p>Inserting Handbook language related to big decisions, like the deactivation or termination of departments</p>	<p>The subcommittee will gather official USG policy documents related to administrative and Senate prerogatives, deactivation and termination of programs, etc.; and will discuss with administration ways to clarify where the language is ambiguous. A final draft will be written and proposed as an Appendix to the Handbook.</p>	<p>Not clear that this would go to any particular committee; may vet this through Faculty Affairs or Academic Affairs just in case.</p>	
<p><b>Administration 2:</b></p> <p>FYE – Faculty Communication</p> <p>FYE Website information</p>	<p>The subcommittee will gather info from the Faculty Senate (and then Faculty Affairs) regarding questions about FYE, and an FYE FAQ will then be created in consultation with David Jenkins. Also efforts to create a more effective, faculty-facing section of the FYE website.</p>	<p>Send to Faculty Affairs to get feedback regarding questions about FYE – what it does, interaction with faculty, etc.</p>	

<p><b>Academic Affairs 1:</b></p> <p>Advising Workload – how to recognize or compensate faculty for unusually high-volume advising.</p>	<p>Subcommittee members will discuss ways to streamline paperwork processes with Krista Smith.</p>		
<p><b>Academic Affairs 2:</b></p> <p>Support Arts and Sciences</p>	<p>No specific recommendations discussed.</p>		
<p><b>Academic Affairs 3:</b></p> <p>University 1000</p>	<p>No specific recommendations discussed.</p>		
<p><b>Faculty Affairs 1:</b></p> <p>Overload Pay</p>	<p>No specific recommendations discussed. Send to Faculty Affairs for discussion.</p>	<p>Sent to Faculty Affairs as future agenda item.</p>	

<p><b>Faculty Affairs 2:</b></p> <p>Faculty Development Grants: concern with funding and application calendar</p>	<p>Subcommittee will send recommendation to FDG Committee regarding clarifications of the process regarding distribution of funds when insufficient, application calendar, as well as financial reporting requirements on FDG minutes.</p>	<p>Proposal/issue to be sent to FDG Committee.</p>	
<p><b>Student Affairs 1:</b></p> <p>SSC and Experiential Learning Office Structure and Engagement</p>	<p>Subcommittee members will schedule discussion with Experiential Learning Office to better understand what the office is doing, and how faculty/students can utilize it.</p>		
<p><b>Student Affairs 2:</b></p> <p>Micro-managing RSOs</p>	<p>Subcommittee will schedule meeting with Dr. Boren and FYE team to discuss policies and processes surrounding RSO's. Recommendations may ensue.</p>		
<p><b>Student Affairs 3:</b></p> <p>Student Support Services (or lack thereof)</p>	<p>No specific recommendations discussed.</p>		



