

Regular Meeting of the State of CT
Faculty Advisory Committee to the Board of Regents for Higher Education
Minutes
December 7, 2018
61 Woodland St., Hartford, CT

Present:

Adair, Stephen, CCSU	Richards, Barbara, Fac, HCC
Aime, Lois, Admin Fac, At-Large Rep	Washko, Lisa, Admin Fac, alternate, CCSU
Bechard, Kevin, Fac, alternate MCC	Shea, Mike, SCSU
Cummings, Delwyn, Fac Vice-Chair, NVCC	Owoye, Oluwole, Fac, WCSU
Lugo, William, Chair, Fac, ECSU	Newgarden, Kristi, Admin Fac, alternate, COSC
Linda Wilder, COSC	

Guests:

Colena Sesanker, GWCC

Meeting called to order at 1:05 pm

1. Introductions
2. Discussion/Revision/Approval of Agenda- Oluwole, 2nd Mike
3. Discussion/Revision/Approval of Minutes- Kevin, Oluwole
4. Reflections from FAC Special Meeting
-discussed
5. Regional Presidents searches and Transparency-
-26 attachments sent by system office was not sufficient. For example, what are the charges of all the ongoing committees? It should be much easier to find out information about what is happening on the committees. Such a statement should be included in the FAC remarks to the board.
-Regional Presidents Searches – what will the regional presidents be doing?, how much support staff will they have, where will they be housed, how much will all this cost and where is money coming from? The FAC passed a resolution on the searches (5 yes, 1 abstention) – to be included in the FAC remarks to the board.
6. CCSU Resolution- the FAC discussed the many resolutions and controversies occurring on campuses. The FAC passed a resolution (5 yes, 1 abstention) supporting faculties' right to voice dissent on their campuses.
7. FAC comments for December joint BOR meeting- The FAC voiced support for the remarks circulated by William Lugo with the addition of adding the FAC resolution on Regional President searches, a statement on the lack of transparency in system office committees, and a statement on maintaining academic excellence.
8. VP of Enrollment search update- William and Del notified the FAC they had been asked to attend a forum for the VP of Enrollment search.
9. FAC Conference updates

10. BOR Subcommittee Reports – Del and William gave updates regarding their subcommittees.
11. CSCU Impact Statement- the FAC discussed the recently released CSCU Impact study from Emsi and was supportive of the study and its results.
12. FAC Webpage- no update
13. Community College Representation subcommittee updates - no update
14. New business - none
15. Items for future meetings
 - it was suggested and agreed the FAC should rotate its meetings to other campuses.
 - ask the system office to provide updated savings targets for the consolidation.

Minutes submitted by William Lugo

FAC Resolution on the Regional Presidents' Searches

The FAC finds the hiring of regional presidents for the community colleges to be a troubling irony. Students First was presented as a strategy to reduce sharply the number of community colleges administrators who were not “student facing,” but now, the first concrete step being taken is to hire more senior administrators who are not “student facing.”

We are also concerned that the practical functioning of these regional presidents will result in continuing increases in administrative expenses. Whether we eventually get to a single college or not, the regional presidents certainly add an additional layer of administration between the campuses and the system office.

In the present context, it is difficult to see what these regional presidents will preside over. Campus departments will continue to report to the campus chief executive office/president, and these regional presidents are not integrated with ongoing procedures and policies relative to student and academic affairs, and general college functioning.

To the extent that the regional presidents are held to be accountable for initiatives and priorities coming from the system office, it will likely create significant administrative friction as few faculty and staff will report directly to them. In addition, creating authorities with little to preside over may also create “greedy” offices, in which there is a functional demand to expand an administrative staff to meet the expectations to which they are being held accountable.

In the months leading up to the Students First initiative, President Ojakian often remarked about one campus that had shortened weekend library hours, as an example of misplaced priorities. In the face of budget shortages, a campus president had apparently elected to reduce student services, rather than their own administrative office. In hiring regional presidents, it seems to us that the system office and the board are perpetuating the same misplaced priorities. Hiring regional presidents not only expands the administration, but also creates new offices that may find themselves compelled to further the power of their own administration by expanding its own staff.

FAC Resolution on Statement of Support to Faculty Voices

Recent resolutions¹ have called for the establishment of a process that makes Shared Governance in the planning and implementation Students First possible. Those resolutions have been ignored.

In the absence of any structure that governs meaningful faculty contributions to the plan, any attempt to make such contributions will necessarily be disruptive to the established protocol. However, according to standard 3:15 of our accrediting body, faculty bear “....primary responsibility for the content, quality and effectiveness of the curriculum....”.

To uphold that responsibility, it will be necessary that faculty engage critically with the details of the plan to the extent that they affect curriculum. If faculty opinion- whether individually or collectively- should be at odds with the plan approved by the BOR, in the absence of an appropriate venue through which these criticisms can be considered, they have the potential to be misinterpreted as hostile or insubordinate and yet, the BOR’s official position reads as follows: “Many academic and institutional policies are subject to faculty and staff review and comment, and people should be free to voice their views and their dissent.” (CSCU Code of Conduct passed by the BOR 10/19/2017)

In such an atmosphere, it is necessary to reaffirm faculty rights and responsibilities

Therefore

Whereas NECHE standards of accreditation include an expectation that “faculty have a substantive voice in matters of educational programs ... [and] primary responsibility for the content, quality, and effectiveness of the curriculum...” (Standard 3.15);

And,

Whereas the CSCU Code of Conduct includes a provision that “Many academic and institutional policies are subject to faculty and staff review and comment, and people should be free to voice their views and their dissent.” (CSCU Code of Conduct passed by the BOR 10/19/2017);

The FAC pledge our commitment to supporting and defending our responsibility to engage in active and critical debate to the end of preserving the quality of education we provide to Connecticut’s communities.

¹SFASACC resolution (September 2018), Gateway Resolutions on Shared Governance (April and October 2018), FAC resolution on Shared governance (October 2018)