**JACKSON STATE UNIVERSITY**

**Faculty Senate Meeting**

**MINUTES**

**Zoom Meeting**

**February 25, 2021**

**10 a.m.**

**Executive Committee/Senators in Attendance**: Dr. Dawn McLin, Mr. Don Spann, Dr. Okechukwu Anyamele, Dr. Carolyn Howard, Dr. Sophia Leggett, Dr. André Hines, Dr. Barbara Graham, Dr. Thomas Kersen, Dr. Gloria Billingsley, Dr. Jessica Murphy, Dr. Tony Latiker, Dr. Jennifer Wiles, Dr. Chaiqua Harris, Dr. Brian Anderson, Dr. Barbara Howard, Dr. LaDonnya Drummond, Dr. Siddig Fageir, Dr. Jie Ke, Dr. John Walls, Ms. Ella Moore-Boyd, Dr. Glenda Windfield, Dr. Brent Thoma, Dr. J. C. Assad, Dr. Kaye Sly, Dr. Edmond Marem, Dr. Ranjani W. Rulawardhana, Dr. Felicite Noubissi, Dr. Ariane Mbemi, Dr. Jung Hye Lee, and Dr. Ningning Wang,

**Other Attendees:** Dr. Joseph Whittaker and Dr. Almesha Campbell

1. **Welcome:**

The meeting was called to order at 10:03am by President Dr. McLin. Dr. McLin welcomed all Senators and Faculty in attendance. She expressed appreciation for the work of the senators especially during the challenges of the pandemic, power outages, and water problems.

1. **Review of Minutes:** The meeting minutes for January 28, 2021 were approved with no amendments.
2. **Committee Updates:**

* **Website –** Mr. Spann reported that the minutes are now being posted on the website and there is a tab for Faculty Recognition.
* **Budget –** Mr. Spann reported that the work from home essential kits will be distributed as soon as the University is beyond the water problems caused by the freezing temperatures. He will send out distribution dates and times in a few days.
* **Research –** Dr. Leggett reported that the Research committee met last month and is looking forward to the report on the research plan from Dr. Whittaker in today’s meeting. She shared that the committee is waiting for the hiring of the Research Assistant that will come out of the Research office.
* **Curriculum & Teaching –** Dr. Howard reported that the Curriculum and Teaching committee is in the process of developing a standardize curriculum change process and updating the Office of Academic Affairs website to include updated forms. She expects the website will be available by the end of March. Dr. Barbara Howard indicated that she is on the handbook committee and is not aware of a meeting. In response, Dr. Carolyn Howard reported that the faculty senate handbook committee has not met, however the activities reported reflected the University wide handbook committee.

Dr. Brian Anderson reported that the Promotion and Tenure committee are expecting to have their final meeting on Monday and will submit their draft to the Provost after that meeting.

**Faculty Life –** Dr. Hines reported that the Faculty Life met on February 17th. She has shared the Faculty Life committee roles and responsibilities and priorities with committee members. She shared that she is hoping to have a draft of the handbook for the next meeting scheduled for March 9th. Dr. C. Howard indicated that she would share the faculty handbook with Dr. Hines.

1. **Remembering Dr. Lolita Gray**- Dr. McLin announced the passing of one of our colleagues and faculty senator Dr. Lolita Gray. The Senators paused for a few moments of silence in honor of Dr. Gray and her service to the Senate and the University.
2. **Faculty Hall of Fame Committee -** Dr. McLin indicated that she has received names of volunteers for the Faculty Hall of Fame Committee. Dr. McLin will be scheduling the first meeting for the committee.
3. **Faculty Pay Study: –** Dr. McLin shared that she has reached out to Ms. Paula Nelson who has the responsibility of getting the contract signed and getting the pay study started. Ms. Nelson indicated that she does not have what she needs to work from home. Dr. McLin was able to get the amount of the pay study reduced from $60,000 to $50,000. She will continue to work with administration to move the pay study forward.

A senator inquired about the timeline of the pay study, specifically; when will the study take place and how long will it last. Dr. McLin expressed that she is following up with Ms. Nelson to push the study forward. She shared that the Provost is working to provide Ms. Nelson what she needs to work from home.

1. **Transparency: University Strategic Plan Committee –** Discussion centered on the need for transparency regarding the Strategic Plan. President Hudson indicated in the meeting with the Executive Committee that he is picking up where the previous President left off. He reported that Dr. Portifield is working on the draft. Dr. McLin encouraged all Senators to review the Board book. She reported that Dr. Shelton is the new Director of Strategic Initiatives; because he is under contract, they created the position for him.
2. **Covid-19 Update –** It was reported that all persons on campus, including athletes, and coaches are expected to wear masks. Ultra violet machines are in use. President Hudson has reported that the App has been updated and is working. He is encouraging us to download the App. There was concern expressed that Coach Sanders does not wear a mask although the University has sponsored a mask-up campaign. Faculty members are concern that this is sending the wrong message and wants us all to be on the same page with promoting safe standards.
3. **Transparency: Copy of SACSCOC off site report; Virtual Site Visit 3/23-25**

There is concern that faculty has been pulled from classrooms because of credentialing concerns. The Senate has requested that the Provost send us copies of the SACSCOC report that relates to faculty on multiple occasions but has not received the information. This is a transparency concern.

A faculty member expressed concern that after 13-15 years of teaching they are being told that they are not qualified. It was also shared that in the same college an associate dean was appointed and almost destroyed the department; when questioned, it was never shared how or why the appointment was made.

1. **Transparency: QEP; Faculty Involvement –** The QEP report has been received; however, the concern is that there was not transparency during the process before final decisions were made. The senate is requesting that faculty are involved and informed during the decision making process. This is a transparency concern.
2. **Evaluation Drafts (Faculty, Chairs &Deans) –** It is concerning that faculty are being asked to start the evaluation process March 1st but has not received the drafts of the updated evaluations for faculty, chairs, and deans. Dr. McLin shared that the Provost has been promising to share the Evaluation Drafts since November. Faculty members are asking that their evaluations be waived or timelines extended until they are able to evaluate chairs and deans. Concerns regarding how the faculty evaluations and SIRS were updated to accommodate the virtual and pandemic environment were expressed.
3. **Advisement Center, Class enrollment, Census Day, EAB, Graduation Clearance, etc. –** Dr. McLin reported that this morning she received a lengthy email from a student regarding problems with the advisement center. The student expressed that her graduation was held up because of ill advisement from the advisement center. She reported that she is receiving different information from the advisement center and her department. The student sent the letter to President Hudson, the Commissioner of Higher Education, and several others.

Other concerns shared by faculty includes: a) Students being put into classes without faculty’s knowledge; b) Degree Works and EAB having different information; and c) Concern that we are not using EAB efficiently. A senator shared that a long time ago there was expressed concern regarding the lack of coordination between the advisement center and the departments. It was reported that the advisement center is enrolling students beyond the approved enrollment limits in the graduate programs also.

1. **Transparency – College Safety Plans, Faculty Involvement, Fall 2021 (class sizes, - social distancing, etc.) Emergency Action and Response Plan, JSU last updated 2014. –** The Provost informed the Executive Committee that although all Colleges were asked for plans for Fall 2021, she has not received any plans. Faculty members are expressing concerns regarding the lack of plans for Fall 2021 although the University expects 70% of faculty back on campus. It was reported that some faculty were given an option to teach virtually or face-to-face in the fall and some faculty were not. It was reported that the Provost is encouraging faculty to use larger lecture halls for larger classes; however there is a limited number of larger lecture halls making social distancing impossible in many cases.

Dr. McLin expressed that there has been reported concern regarding the University’s readiness for an emergency/disaster. It was reported that the last Emergency Action Response Plan was updated in 2014.

1. **Timelines for Completing Assignments/Retaking Exams, Plans due to Winter Storm, Documentation, Students, etc. Deadline: 7days. –** The Provost sent out an email suggesting a 7 day timeline for students to complete assignments due to the winter storm. In response to the lack of clarity regarding the 7 day timeline, it was suggested that faculty decided when the 7 days will begin and end. A senator expressed concern that students are being encouraged to go home during the water issues with no plan for a safe return during the pandemic.
2. **School of Public Health Committee Renaming Meeting –** The School of Public Health renaming committee meeting is scheduled for Friday February 26, 2021
3. **Software Requests –** It was reported that some colleges have received their software requests; however others have not received their request. Dr. McLin suggested that faculty contact her if they have not received their requests because there are Covid funds available for software.
4. .**State of Searches for Interim Deans, Institutional Research list of Committee Members –** It was reported that the searches for the Dean positions in Liberal Arts and the College of Education have been opened. The Institutional of Research Office position has not been posted. The faculty senate has request a list of committee members but has not received those names.
5. **AOB**

* Campus Water Issues / Donations $600 Raised – As a result of students reporting a lack of drinking water and low snacks in the pantry, the faculty senate raised $600 to purchase bottled water and snacks for the pantry. As of Tuesday evening students are being served hot meals again. The problems were a result of the winter storm in the area.
* Disparaging Comments about JSU – Dr. McLin reported that she and the Provost received many calls, texts, and emails form faculty and alumni expressing their concerns regarding the comments made on national television by Coach Sanders after his personal items were allegedly stolen. Faculty expressed concerns about the Coach’s comments regarding faculty standards. In response to Coach Sanders comments, the Executive Committee sent a letter to President Hudson and copied Coach Sanders, the Provost, and the Athletic Director. The letter was shared during the faculty senate meeting. A senator suggested that the senate have a standing committee to deal with public relation issues. It was expressed that maybe we should just send the Coach a gentle reminder because he probably had no ill intent and was just upset over his personal items being stolen. It was also expressed that we should expect the Coach to act like a professional and not speak out against JSU because he is upset.

It was agreed that we are one JSU and should hold each other accountable for our actions and a discussion should be had with the Coach regarding the historical context that HBCU’s have been placed in.

* Intercession & Summer Sessions / Role of Coordinators – Concern was expressed that the procedures and policies for intercession and summer sessions need to be reviewed because faculty are teaching courses that are dropped with no compensation for the time teaching. It was suggested that we go back to prorating faculty pay in these situations. Concern was also expressed regarding Coordinators who are stuck in positons because of SACSCOC with no compensation.

1. **Dr. Whittaker –** Guest Speaker 11a: Dr. Whittaker provided an update on the Research Department to the Senate. He reported the following:
   1. Contrary to rumors, research dollars are higher that they have been for the past 3 years; at over $29 million. Most of the money is from the Department of Education, NSF, and NIH; the rest is from state agencies.
   2. There is a reduction in research grants written. There are lots of sub-contracts which are small dollar amounts and the University receives no indirect cost on them.
   3. Indirect Cost Allocations have not changed since Dr. Whittaker’s employment with the University. Specific guidelines are located on the University’s website.
   4. Dr. Whittaker spends much of his time on Research Security which includes issues of clearance, potential conflicts of interest and conflicts of commitment. He expressed that because we are in a Gulf state, we are vulnerable.
   5. The research office has opened no new positions; only hired staff where individuals left positions. He shared that he has restructured the office and cross trained staff to avoid hiring.
   6. Dr. Whittaker has a committee looking at guidelines because he is aware that sometimes junior faculty members are not given credit on proposals.
   7. Dr. Whittaker shared that one of his responsibilities include speaking with legislators in an effort to secure support for JSU and other HBCUs. He reported that we have teams of advocates working on our behalf to secure resources for JSU and HBCUs and sometimes he has an opportunity to give input on Bills prior to the final markup. He also reported that although it appears that there is an effort to get resources to HBCUs; the mechanisms to get the resources to us have not changed.

Questions & Answers:

1. What are the research dollars from 2019-2021? Dr. Campbell provided a spreadsheet with the documentation.
2. What is the availability of grant funds from the research office to support faculty grant writing including administrative support? What is the plan for support for summer seed monies for research? It was reported that typically the research office communicates with the Deans when there is support requested and to get faculty involvement. Deans and Chairs may request funds for seed money for faculty research. Dr. Whittaker reported that the research office has written several grants to support faculty grant writing and just received funding for the women’s business center. He also indicated that his office must abide by the University and IHL standards when supporting faculty in grants. Dr. Whittaker indicated that there are challenges with supplementing full-time faculty with grants because of federal policies.
3. A senator shared that there was an increase in funding due to Covid which called for a redistribution resulting in an increase in faculty research capacity; and asked where is the funding to increase research capacity?
4. The concern that although the Senate has requested that PI’s receive a report of their indirect cost amounts, the information has not been shared. Dr. Campbell indicated that the research office has not received the request; however, she will send the report because it is readily available for each PI. She also shared a report of the IDC redistribution.

Dr. Whittaker reported that incentives for PIs comes from indirect cost savings and are available for PIs; however the funds must be requested. It was reported that often times these dollars are not used and rolls over into the general fund. It was reported that PIs have 2 years to use the funds. It was shared that during Covid the University has been very flexible with the 2 year timeframe because the goal is to get the funds to faculty. Senators expressed concern that this information is not shared with PIs and as a result many are not aware that the funds are available to them.

1. A senator asked where was the $208,427 allocated? Dr. Whittaker reported that these funds have not been allocated.
2. Concerns of Transparency were expressed by several senators. Senators expressed concern that faculty was not involved in developing the strategic plan; and is oftentimes informed after decisions are made.
3. What is the process for requesting administrative support on grants? It was reported that sometimes incorrect information is received from research staff. Dr. Whittaker encouraged faculty to have a conversation with the research office for assistance in creating budgets and for other administrative support. He suggested that he and Dr. Campbell be copied on correspondence if we do not receive the support needed.
4. When speaking with legislators, are you involving faculty with experience in certain areas? Dr. Whittaker responded that he does involve faculty when he can however, oftentimes legislators are only willing to speak with one or two point persons and want information right away. He reported that requests usually are umbrella issues and not at the faculty level and it is left up to Deans when it comes to faculty involvement.

It was suggested that there be a strategic plan for short-term and long-term action and the Faculty Senate President should be one of the key players. This would enable the University to be proactive and ready to respond with faculty support when a call is received or a request is made by legislators or potential supporters.

Senators were encouraged to send any other questions or concerns to Dr. Leggett, the Faculty Senate Research Committee Chair.

Faculty expressed appreciation to Dr. Whittaker and Dr. Campbell.

1. **Adjournment -** Dr. Anyamele moved that the meeting be adjourned. The motion was seconded by Dr. Leggett. The meeting was adjourned at 11:56am.

Submitted March 22, 2021 by Dr. André Hines, Secretary