

Faculty Town Hall
UCO Faculty Senate
Wednesday, October 5, 2022
2:00 – 3:30 pm
Liberal Arts Lecture Hall
www.menti.com – code 7370030

1. President Provencio (2:02 pm)
 - a. Introduction and purpose of the meeting
 - b. Acknowledgment of Faculty Senators by college
 - c. Acknowledgment of visitors (Staff Senate and student journalists)
 - d. Recent cases in higher education
 - i. Emporia State University case
 - ii. University of Tulsa case
 - iii. New York University case
 - e. UCO 2022-23 enrollment statistics
 - i. Headcount – 12,311 (-7.7%)
 - ii. FTE – 9,389 (-7.8%)
 - iii. Credit hours – 139,681 (-8%)
 - iv. Freshman enrollment – 2,851 (-6.3%)
 - v. Spring 2023 applications processed to date = 600
 - f. Reduction in faculty lines
 - i. 2021 – 19
 - ii. 2022 – 30
 - iii. 2023 projected – 30+
2. Committee Reports
 - a. Faculty Handbook/Academic Affairs – Parliamentarian Green
 - i. Next meeting – October 27th at 2:00 pm
 - ii. Committee is examining processes for faculty to evaluate administrators beyond (other than) the provost.
 1. Handbook provision could allow for an annual up-down vote of the president; this is not the same as a no confidence vote
 - iii. Committee is pursuing clarification on the evaluation process for all cabinet positions
 - b. Faculty Welfare – Correspondent Goulding (reported by President Provencio)
 - i. Topics of concern:
 1. Tenure
 2. Shared governance
 3. Academic freedom
 4. Benefits (along with the Personnel Policies Committee)
 - c. Personnel Policies/Adjunct Affairs – Representative Webb
 - i. Served in an advisory capacity this summer, alongside Representative Pennington; full report can be found on the Faculty Senate website
 - ii. Discussed the Healthcare Highways selection process for 2023 benefits
 - d. Research, Information Resources, and Technology – Secretary Waters
 - i. Discussed the ongoing technical issues across campus

- ii. Discussed D2L changes and challenges
 - iii. The Information Technology (IT) department continues to experience high turnover, and many positions remain unfilled.
 - e. Student Relations, Alumni, and Community Service – VP Seagraves
 - i. Engaged in research and inquiry related to enrollment issues and best practices.
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Open meeting for faculty questions, comments, and concerns (2:21 pm)

BENEFITS/HEALTH

1. Healthcare Highways
 - a. Why are we changing?
 - Keith explained the process for selection, three providers were considered.
 - We moved away from the RUSO system several years ago.
 - b. Amanda provided information on the upcoming 2023 Open Enrollment Meetings (see Centralities for Monday, Oct. 10, 2022).
2. Challenges with Aetna coverage for the remainder of 2022 coverage
 - a. The ending of the Aetna/SSM Health partnership has resulted in denied coverage for scheduled surgical and other medical procedures.
3. ADDITIONAL ANONYMOUS QUESTIONS:
 - ✓ Why is the university cutting the quality of insurance and benefits for its employees?
 - ✓ Do we have a voice in the new health care being offered for 2023? It has substantially LESS options than what we have now, which has already been downgraded from the year. **Faculty Senate had two representatives on the committee that reviewed the three provider options presented by UCO's insurance broker, BOK. The full report, prepared by our representatives is available on the Faculty Senate website.**
 - ✓ What are we doing to protect disabled students and faculty from COVID when transmission is high? Why have we dropped all CDC masking guidance with high transmission? What is our plan for winter? **The COVID-19 Taskforce has not met since the spring and serves at the pleasure of the President.**
 - ✓ Can you explain the composition and purpose of the 'New Normal Taskforce'? How is the Faculty Senate voice involved in that committee? **FS Executive Committee will reach out for an update on this.**

RECRUITMENT and RETENTION

1. Question: Why are faculty responsible for recruitment, retention, and marketing to students?
 - Alyssa: We have asked ESS for information regarding recruitment efforts but receive vague responses and information. There may also be an issue with our technology and recruitment efforts.
 - Concern: Lack of strategic planning

- Nikki recommended that we consult with ESS regarding their most recent strategic planning efforts.
 - Myron Pope (plus 20 others) worked on the most recent strategic plan with paid consultants, but a final product/report was never issued/received.
 - Luis Montes reported that tuition waivers were implemented as a result of the ESS strategic planning process.
 - Alyssa explained the difference between the Institutional (campus-wide) strategic plan and the ESS strategic plan.
 - Alyssa noted that the Strategic Enrollment Council, led by Dr. Samantha Kramer is in the process of reorganizing.
2. Concern: Recruitment and retention is disrupted by agreements not being honored.
 - Jerry noted that recruitment efforts differ for high schools and junior colleges.
 - Nikki: How does UCO enrollment compare to other RUSO schools especially considering everyone else is experiencing increased enrollment?
 3. ADDITIONAL ANONYMOUS QUESTIONS:
 - ✓ Can we use open enrollment? The flagships are growing because they have open enrollment. How many full-time faculty do we currently have? **This question was addressed in the town hall, clarifying what was meant by open enrollment. UCO is currently test-optional for admission, and ESS is looking at options to rethink priority enrollment.**
 - ✓ What is fall enrollment like at other RUSO institutions? **Aside from Northeastern State University, all other institutions are stable or growing. NSU saw a less than 1% decline in full-time equivalency, while we saw a decline in 7.8% FTE. For an explanation of FTE, please see a related question below.**
 - ✓ Book for Dr. Seagraves committee. Higher education on the brink: reimagining strategic enrollment by Alicia Harvey-Smith. Short, easy read and good ideas on enrollment improvement.
 - ✓ Has UCO considered incentives for incoming freshmen? Some institutions offer up to half off tuition with some stipulations. **We can follow-up on this, but the way tuition waivers are awarded was changed a few years ago; we went to an automatic tuition waiver process where students who meet certain criteria are automatically awarded.**

LEADERSHIP CONCERNS

1. Concerns about leadership capabilities were expressed.
2. Support for a no-confidence vote was articulated.
3. Jerry: The Faculty Senate passed a proposal that a full-time faculty member be given a seat on the Cabinet, which was rejected as potentially being disruptive. Jerry will continue to investigate.
4. Question: What is the current communication between faculty and leadership?
 - Alyssa: September's standing meeting for the executive committee with President Neuhold-Ravikumar was canceled, and at the time of this Town Hall, no new meeting had been scheduled. Other than meeting in May after turnover and Alyssa and Nikki's meeting with the President in August, the executive committee has not met with this semester with the President. **UPDATE: Meeting**

scheduled for October 28, 2022. The FS Executive committee meets with the Provost monthly and the Provost also attends every FS meeting.

5. Question: What is the admin-to-student ratio?
 - a. Concern: Increasing expenditures on administrative staff as enrollment continues to decline.

We can ask for information related to administrative expenditures as the information that I (Alyssa) have is outdated by a couple of years.

6. ADDITIONAL ANONYMOUS QUESTIONS:

- ✓ How do we better support and protect our staff on campus? Some areas of concern for staff (per Staff Senate) include pay (esp. for the lowest paid positions on campus), due process concerns, flexible leave and work arrangements, etc. For more information, please attend and participate in Staff Senate. There are currently faculty that serve on Staff Senate, and the Faculty and Staff Senates are in regular communication.
- ✓ Is the President taking any ownership of the rapid decline in enrollment and the exodus of many experienced staff that the university is barely functioning?
- ✓ Are the Regents aware of the problems? RUSO has hired a consultant to review our enrollment strategies as well as our academic programs. That review is expected to be delivered in April.
- ✓ There seems to have been massive changes to D2L and our email systems this year (lots of domains were blacklisted). Can we do a better job getting heads-ups about changes before they happen? This will be communicated to OIT.

FACULTY SENATE

1. Suggestion: A how-to “use your Faculty Senate” manual for new faculty.
 - Alyssa: A how-to manual is absolutely possible – we will work on this. The FS website has been updated, and there are numerous resources accessible from the site.
 - Information for FS meeting dates and times are available on the website.
2. ADDITIONAL ANONYMOUS QUESTIONS:
 - ✓ Can you post the FS Presidents' reports for the last 3 years on the FS website? These can be found in the minutes from our past meetings.
 - ✓ Can we get a handout of "how to use your Faculty Senate" for new faculty? Not the big long minutes. just a basic "here's what we can do" one-page thing. Think executive summary. Yes! We can absolutely work on creating this.
 - ✓ How often is faculty executive committee meeting with the president? Please see #4 under Leadership Concerns above.
 - ✓ What do we need to do to hold a confidence/no confidence vote this year since the one held by AAUP did not lead to a larger vote by faculty senate? Legislation can be introduced by any faculty senator – legislation of this nature would be considered a resolution. Further information about this can be found in the most recent report from our Parliamentarian at our October meeting.
 - ✓ I would recommend sending out the link to Faculty Senate webpage to faculty often. I didn't realize until last week that minutes, etc., we're available.

FACULTY HANDBOOK

1. Concerns expressed regarding the appeals process.
2. Policy revisions needed for faculty grievances.

HIRE CONSULTANTS

1. Concerns expressed regarding consulting fees that cost hundreds of thousands of dollars.
 - Alyssa: We are paying (paid) Carnegie \$600,000.
We will ask how much is spent on average per year and in the past five years on consultants' fees.
 - Alyssa asked everyone to attend the Carnegie rebranding workshops (and forums) on October 19th and 20th so that our concerns and interests are heard and considered.
2. Nikki noted that the consultant costs and other information can be found on the RUSO website in their meeting notes.
3. Comment: Work being done by the consultants could be done in-house potentially saving some employee positions. **While this may be true, we also want to ensure fair and adequate compensation for any extra work that a faculty member may be asked to do outside of their job scope.**

FINANCIAL ISSUES & FACULTY TERMINATIONS

1. Question: Is there any discussion regarding cost-of-living pay increases due to inflation?
 - Alyssa: Yes, there have been discussions, but with the budget issues and impending faculty terminations, it doesn't seem feasible.
 - Jerry expressed ongoing concerns regarding needed staff pay raises.
 - Keith and Kim are working on CUPA data.
 - Keith also solicited recommendations for an adjunct faculty member to join the committee.
2. Concern: The RUSO funding formula.
 - a. Luis Montes:
 - Issue: Since the 2009-2010 academic year, RUSO funding has continuously decreased, even when our enrollment was increasing.
 - There is limited incentive for RUSO to change the formula for UCO funding.
 - It is important for us to contact our legislators and advocate on our own behalf.
 - Jerry noted that October 14th will begin voter registration on campus.
3. Concern: The apparent conflict between the need to reduce faculty vs. the need to increase credit hour productivity.
4. Concern: No clear indication as to when faculty cuts will end.
5. Question: Where did the 17 to 1 ratio originate, and what are its implications for the budget?
 - The president announced this new ratio at the March 2022 Budget Forum.

- Different accrediting boards use different ratios, making it difficult to do side-by-side comparisons.
 - The 17 to 1 ratio is not from RUSO (publicly), Academic Affairs, or the faculty.
 - The faculty-student ratio is not a budget matter.
 - Luis Montes:
 - 18 to 1 (up to 20 to 1) ratios are common for other RUSO institutions
 - 16 to 1 (and 17 to 1) ratios are common among our peer institutions.
 - Question: If we remove CFAD from the equation, where would the university be in terms of the 17 to 1 ratio? NOTE: Our peer institutions are not removing CFAD from their calculations.
 - Jenna Barger-Johnson: CFAD should be considered, and comparing ourselves to other institutions might be helpful.
 - Academic Affairs and Finance & Operations use different measures.
 - There is a lag in when student credit production numbers and faculty data are reported. UCO uses current student data, but faculty data are dated (by 12-18 months).
6. ADDITIONAL ANONYMOUS QUESTIONS:
- ✓ Can you please explain the term full time equivalency? **Headcount is the number of students enrolled, while full time equivalency is a calculation that translates student credit hours into an equivalent number of full-time, full-year students.**
 - ✓ Firing faculty for low enrollment seems like a convenient way to satisfy someone's behind-the-scenes agenda.
 - ✓ Faculty are being punished for something out of our control. Being punished for bad teaching makes sense. Being punished for the failure of a completely different unit on campus doesn't make sense.
 - ✓ Was the 17:1 ever justified beyond this is what it used to be so long ago?
 - ✓ Last semester, some students got together to protest the staff/faculty cuts--do you think demonstrations like that are effective? What else can students do?
 - ✓ What more do we know about losing 30+ faculty positions this year? It was leaked to local media and denied. Is there a plan in place? **Faculty Senate does not know of any plans in place at this time. However, if we are to achieve a 17:1 ratio, we would be asked to terminate at least 30 faculty to be in alignment with current enrollment levels (this does not take into account projected enrollment for next year).**
 - ✓ A Reagan-era economist, Grover Norquist, once said he would like to make government small enough that you could drown it in the bathtub. Is the President similarly setting up UCO to fail?
 - ✓ The statement was made that we are expecting 30 or more faculty positions to be lost this school year. This was covered on the news and denied. Is there a plan in place this year?
 - ✓ When are layoff notifications required by the faculty handbook for this academic year? **According to the RUSO policy manual, Section 3.8, Dismissal of Tenured Faculty for Program Discontinuance or Financial Retrenchment.**

A faculty member with tenure whose position is terminated based on bona fide lack of need for one's services in the university, or necessity for financial retrenchment,

discontinuance of a program or department will be given five (5) months written notice unless an emergency arises.

Before terminating an appointment because of discontinuance of a program or department, or because of other lack of need of services, the university will make reasonable efforts to place affected members in other suitable positions.

If an appointment is terminated because of financial retrenchment, or because of discontinuance of a program, the released faculty member's position will not be filled by a replacement within a period of two years, unless the released faculty member has been offered reappointment at the previous status.

- ✓ VP Freeman stated something in Staff Senate about emergency funds used for raises and promotion for the next year. Is there information that can be provided about these funds? Does that save positions? **We can ask this question the next time we meet with President Neuhold-Ravikumar.**
- ✓ I'm appalled that departments don't get the credit hour "credit" for Blueprint courses. If we departments are going to be asked to take over the Success Central classes, we should get the credit. **We can relay and clarify this with Provost Simmons.**

ABORTION LEGISLATION

1. We are in regular communication with our Legislative Liaison and have on-going discussions with our General Counsel about legislation that could potentially affect faculty and their classrooms.

NEXT STEPS/ CLOSING COMMENTS

1. The Executive Committee will compile a comprehensive list of faculty questions and concerns.
2. The Faculty Senate will pursue answers to all questions.
3. The importance of managing expectations.
 - a. Ultimate decisions are outside of our control.
4. Continue to keep your questions and concerns coming.
5. Thank you for attending!
6. There were 33 anonymous questions submitted through www.menti.com during the Town Hall – they are captured above.
7. Attendance – approximately 90.