

Kilgore College Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes

Date/Time: Friday, March 24, 2023 9:00 am – 10:00 am

Location: Woodfin Center on Kilgore College Campus and Zoom

Meeting presided over by Faculty Senate President: Cori Holden-Williams

Senators in Attendance (in-person and on Zoom): Nick Simpson, Meredith May, Cori Holden-Williams, Carrie Poe, Danny Darden, Gin Germany, Debbie Williams, John Whitehead, Kenya Ray, Kristi Kleinig, Susan Yellot

Others on Zoom: Brian Johnson, Cole Kruger, Dorothy Puckett, Joe Kirchoff, Kate Yglesias, Portia Scott

Titling Committee Updates: from Danny Darden, Chair

- No new updates

Academic Honesty Committee Updates: from Meredith May, Chair

- There was a meeting with Dr. Skopek, and she gave her blessings to changes/ideas that are in the works. These are the same proposals reported in the last senate meeting, including: updating the definition of academic dishonesty in the student handbook (including use of Artificial Intelligence apps); creating a Blackboard course over academic dishonesty for students; creating an academic dishonest option through Early Alert, along with ways for instructors to look up previous alerts for academic dishonesty for a specific student (per Ebony Allison-Dennis)
- These changes, along with instructions to faculty, should be ready one to two weeks before Fall 2024 semester begins.
- There will also be an update written for the faculty handbook with guidelines for how to handle academic dishonesty in a more uniform way across the college
- The committee lost some members due to faculty members leaving the college; Meredith asked for new volunteers. Faculty member Brian Johnson volunteered. Cori will send an email to faculty asking for another volunteer, to give the committee six members total.

Multi-Modal Committee Updates: from Nick Simpson, Chair

- Nick has prepared slides of the committee's proposal ideas (these ideas were reported to the senate at the previous meeting) to take to Dr. Skopek next week and get her input.

New Faculty Senate Executive Officers business:

- The next President-Elect of the faculty senate (for the 2024-2025 academic year) is Nick Simpson.
- Cori appointed faculty member Kate Yglesias as the Legislative Liaison for the senate; Kate will give updates to the senate on relevant legislation at the state and federal levels.
- Cori appointed faculty senator Michelle Sullivan as the Pedagogical Liaison; Michelle will give updates to the senate on new/relevant pedagogy changes or recommendations

Legislative Update: from Kate Yglesias (a copy of these updates can be found on Faculty Senate Bb Course)

- Recent study shows 12% increase in dual-enrollment students at community colleges, while transfer student enrollment has declined by almost 8%.
- In state legislative news, the House Appropriations Committee signed off on the spending plan, which Dr. Kays has spoken with divisions across the college about, that provides \$650 million in additional funding for community colleges in an outcomes-based funding model. This plan contains a rider that bans the use of state funds for offices that promote diversity, equity and inclusion (aka DEI) in hiring practices or on campus.
 - Cori reported that the Kilgore College DEI committee is brainstorming ways to rename their committee. Offices that promote DEI can still exist, but would not be able to use these state funds, and would need private funding.
- Sen. Brandon Creighton (R-Conroe) filed a bill to have the Liberty Institute created as a new college at UT Austin.
- Creighton also filed a bill (SB 17) that would prohibit the use of a DEI office that considers anything but “color-blind and sex-neutral” hiring practices, training, or activity. The bill also calls for the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to maintain a list of people who are found to violate the section of the law, and that universities cannot hire people on that list. Universities would face large fiscal penalties for violations of this section of the law.
 - Some faculty members were very put off by this idea. Kate expressed that the sentiment behind this proposed bill seems to be directed more towards four-year institutions, not community colleges.
- In federal legislative news, Biden administration has requested \$200 million in the budget for a program to support expanding access for dual-enrollment, work-based learning, and college and career advising for high school students.
- This month, the extended pandemic-related SNAP benefits will end, which may affect a large portion of our student body.
 - Many faculty members suggested promoting drives for the student food pantry with our departments, perhaps even making it a friendly competition.

Updates from the President on Meeting with Drs. Skopek and Kays: from Cori Holden-Williams

- Dr. Kays TASB salary study (for budget for salary changes) to board at April meeting, and it was approved, but the majority of the changes will be to staff who make under \$30k per year; faculty will see little of this money in salary changes. (Administration is going to do a separate salary study for faculty?)
- Dr. Skopek does want to go forward with an official Rank/Tenure system that would likely start Fall 2024; no specific details yet, but Faculty Senate, and likely the current Titling Committee, will be involved. An increase in rank would include a pay raise, but that pay increase wouldn’t happen until the following fiscal year.
- Dr. Skopek was amenable to the inclusion of evaluations of deans by faculty in the evaluations that she does; still need to discuss further.
- Technical needs/support: Dr. Kays is open and wants to help with student connectivity issues and equipment, like WiFi and laptops, but says it would cost \$2 million to get the dorms set up with WiFi (many faculty said this seems way too high; where did she get this estimate from?) The dorms do have small computer labs. She was open to ideas such as a laptop and/or “hotspot” check out from the library, or beta testing longer hours in the library at Kilgore campus.
- Blackboard: We are on year 1 of a three-year consortium contract with Blackboard, so any consideration of going to a new LMS needs time to consider and budget. Some faculty are in

favor of going to a new platform like Canvas, but others have heard (from Canvas directly) that not all Blackboard courses would be transferable to Canvas, and they would have to start over building the course shells from scratch. That's a no go for many. Cori will create a Google doc in the Senate blackboard organization page for open comments.

- Aramark/IT tickets: Kays and Skopek seemed appalled that some problems don't get resolved for weeks or months, or the ticket is "closed" without the problem actually being resolved. Dr. Kays stated that after the first incident ticket is put in, if a response is not received within 3 days, contact your department chair and dean about it.
- Blackbelt After Hours help desk: Informed Kays that the students do not find it helpful; she will look at some data and see if we need to put our resources with a different company.
- At next meeting with Dr. Skopek, Cori will bring up some of the other topics that the senate wanted addressed, that didn't get discussed in this meeting: faculty representatives on some campus committees, an ethics hotline, the cost of printing at the print shop, department chair duties.

New Business/Proposals for Ideas for Faculty Senate:

- **Update the Faculty Senators list:** message or email Carrie Poe (cpoe@kilgore.edu) if you are a faculty senator and which department you represent.
- Nick Simpson wants to add a "proxy" seat for a staff member from those divisions that teach on Fridays, and therefore can't have a faculty senate member to attend.
- Kate Yglesias suggested having an easy reference source/instructions for day-to-day/common tasks that faculty have to do (e.g. who to contact, the procedure to submit things, where certain buildings/offices are). Suggest to HR that these need to be included in new employee orientation.
- Some educator expenses can be deducted from taxes (and the amount you can deduct went up), but this only applies to K-12 teachers, not higher education faculty. BUT if you teach a dual-credit class, you should be able to make that deduction.

Meeting closed by Cori Holden-Williams

Meeting notes recorded by Carrie Poe