

Report on UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF GEORGIA (USG) FACULTY COUNCIL

Occurred on March 31, 2017

Occurred at USG Offices Atlanta Georgia

Chair for the meeting was Victoria Smith-Butler

Note: The meeting was delayed by the I-85 interstate fire and subsequent state government buildings opening on a delayed schedule (10:00 am). Also, the GA legislature just adjourned at 1:00 am on this day.

1. Chancellor Steve Wrigley discussed items
 - a. **Campus Carry:** The Chancellor reiterated the USG's position that current law would best serve the USG institutions. He mentioned briefly the number of last minute areas exempted from the law to include Faculty & Administrative offices as well as daycares and classrooms that have "move on" students (jointly enrolled high school students). Naturally, the latter possess several logistical challenges to implantation. For this as well as overall, the Chancellor commented at length how the USG attorneys would be reviewing the law to develop appropriate policies if adopted by the Governor.
 - b. **Campus Felonies:** The Chancellor commented about this bill not passing. He did comment that if the bill had pass, he has felt that current USG policies were already sufficient to meet the defunct bill's intent.
 - c. **Campus Sanctuary:** The Chancellor commented that the USG institutions were all public institutions and already compliant with the new bill. There was a comment from the floor that Emory had been eyed as possibly being in violation of the proposed law. However, Emory has recently changed the wording of their policy to also be in compliance.
 - d. **Budget:** The Chancellor was very excited to inform us that a budget that was very favorable to USG institutions was passed. This include among a number of things, merit raise pool and full funding of the employer portion of the healthcare plan. Last year for the later, institutions had to fund out of hide. The Chancellor was hoping to further build confidence in higher education among the legislature to continue their solid support of USG institutions.
 - e. **Academic Calender:** The Chancellor confirmed that they were beginning to look at academic calendar policy system wide.
 - f. **Capping Tuition:** The Chancellor discussed some of the proposals of the past legislative session to place caps on tuition. These ideas ranged from a hard cap to a cap indexed to various factors. The USG is against such legislation.
2. Dr. Marti Venn (USG liason and Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs)
 - a. **Consolidation:** This was a continuing hot topic with many campuses current undergoing consolidation. Dr. Venn also highlighted that most

campuses Macon and to the south were currently running budgets in the red.

- i. **Albany State** representatives brought up several issues undergoing at their campus. This included a precipitous enrollment drop. This was suggested to be a reflection that students wanted to avoid intuitions in transition. Regrettably, these enrollment drops triggered a budget crises where scores of faculty are being given/or will receive one year. Current information is that it will be a first in/last out. Tenure is not currently being viewed as a consideration. There was discussion about previous commitments by the prior Chancellor to encourage other USG institutions to hire the affected faculty. Also, there was discussion pertaining to BOR rules about the new president of the Albany campus deciding to preside over the faculty council of Albany. The Albany representatives made pleas to the Chancellor to address the issue. The Chancellor agreed to help facilitate a meeting between the faculty and the president in an attempt to handle the matter at an institutional level.
 - ii. **Bainbridge State** representatives reported their concerns about their consolidation. Although the USG initially announced consolidation with Abraham Baldwin Agriculture College, they were recently notified that their certificate programs and health sciences programs were being separated from the consolidation with ABAC and would now be consolidated with the local technical school. The big concern of Bainbridge State was that the tenured faculty associated with those programs would be transferred to non-tenured positions. Discussion was held on ways to assist these faculty and how these consolidations have a tremendously negative impact on moral.
3. Charlie Sutlive (Head of USG Communications)
 - a. **Seeking to change the public and legislatures view of faculty:** He discussed how he was seeking to communicate better to the public and legislature how important faculty were to the high education of Georgia. He mentioned the obstacles/preconceptions that USG has been seeking to overcome in seeking faculty raises as well as support for USG institutions as a whole.
 - b. **USG Campus Spotlight:** One of the programs he has launched was USG Campus Spotlight where the BOR brought in faculty and students from one campus per meeting to highlight that campuses contributions to Georgia. He mentioned the UGA blueberry story as an example. He mentioned difficulty in finding stories. He previously been trying to get material through institutional government liaisons with limited success. The council suggested that he seek out the faculty council representatives as they may be more plugged in to stories the BOR may wish to highlight to the legislature.
4. Dennis Marks (USG Retiree Council)

- a. Reiterated the issue of USG retirees having to contend with a defined contribution plan versus the defined benefit plan that they had been on in previous years.
 - b. Requested and a motion was made, seconded, and passed to send a USG Faculty Council Representative to their meeting. The EC committee would select a representative at a later date in order to solicit individuals that were not able to make the meeting could be considered.
5. Dr. Robert Scott (Georgia AAUP President)
 - a. Summarized the AAUP ability to influence institutional issues where they found that the institution unfairly treating faculty. This included possibly sanctioning the institution.
6. A motion was made, seconded, and passed to create three Ad Hoc committees to be more effective at gathering information and dealing with long standing issues:
 - a. **Administrative Bloat.** With the number of budgetary shortfalls due to under enrollment at many campuses, the USG Faculty Council is concerned about rumor of increases in administrative positions and compensation throughout USG. This committee will be focus on gathering the information for the USG to have an informed discussion.
 - b. **Administrative Evaluations.** A number of council members during the Fall meeting had concerns about the uniformity of administrative evaluations and how much of a role faculty had in those evaluations.
 - c. **Consolidations.** With the number of consolidations on-going in the USG the council felt that a committee that could gather appropriate information and be a source for information and guidance to impacted campuses.
7. A motion was made, seconded, and passed for the council to consider a motion on the 331/3 summer rule via email prior to the next meeting. This issue was discussed at length during the Fall meeting and predominately impacted faculty at campuses where they taught multiple summer courses.
8. A motion was made, seconded, and passed to select the next Communications officer (webmaster) for the USG Faculty council. The current officer, Timothy Brown was nominated unopposed and selected.
9. A motion was made, seconded, and passed to select the next Chair-Elect for the USG Faculty council. Two candidates, Scott Pegan (UGA) and Juone Brown (Fort Valley State) were nominated. Scott Pegan was selected as the Chair-Elect for the next year.
10. A motion was made, seconded, and passed to select the next Secretary for the USG Faculty council. Only one candidate was nominated and agreed to the nomination, Sarah Mergel (Dalton State). She was selected.
11. In new business, one member brought up a recent USG policy to limit P-cards to 100 per campus. Concerns were discussed about hampering research and other educational activities do to the new policy. One member shared that their campus reduced to zero in light of an institutional decision and that P-card holders would have to undergo a new credit check that would ding their credit.