

Senate Year End Report

2017-2018

Donnetrice Allison, President (2017-2019)

As I reflect on the ninth year of operations of the Faculty Senate, I am first and foremost humbled and honored to be the first woman and first person of color to hold this position. I want to thank all those who held the office before me for their support and advice, particularly the immediate past president, who I had the pleasure of serving under as vice president. While each president has had his own style, I am grateful for the freedom I had to carve out my own path. I am also grateful for the dedication and forward-thinking of the Senate Executive Committee. They were an incredible group to work with, and I truly appreciate their patience as I learned the ropes and found my way. I know that whatever success I have had as President has been due largely to their efforts.

This year, the Senate met eight times, which included the end-of-the-year retreat in May. The Faculty Assembly met three times, which included a meeting with the University President on the State of the University. This document will provide an overview of the actions undertaken by the senate this year, and also a review of issues raised and discussed. The document begins with a simple listing of actions, then continues with a more detailed summary of each. Additional information about each meeting, standing committee and task force can be found on the senate webpage <https://stockton.edu/faculty-senate/index.html>.

Senate Actions

1. Adopted changes to Faculty Senate Attendance Policy.
2. Approved resolution to name the event room of the Atlantic City Academic Building “The Fannie Lou Hamer Event Room.”
3. Senate Executive Committee changed the AY 2018-19 senate meeting schedule to Fridays at 12:45 (within the Friday course module).
4. Approved POLS International Affairs Concentration.
5. Formed Task Force on Hate Speech in Academia.
6. Approved STEAM LIBA for EDUC.
7. Approved BA in Africana Studies.
8. Formed Task Force on LIBA.
9. Approved Business Analytics Concentration in BUSN.
10. Approved changes to policy on accepting undergraduate transfer credits.
11. Approved minor in Migration Studies.

12. Approved CLCE Concentration.
13. Approved recommendations of the SAT Optional Task Force.
14. Approved Cannabis Studies Minor.
15. Approved moratorium on LIBA degree proposals.

Summary of Senate Actions

Proposals

This year, the Faculty Senate approved two new Bachelor's degrees: in Africana Studies and in STEAM as a LIBA in the School of Education. The BA degree in Africana Studies was approved to begin in fall 2019 within the School of Arts and Humanities, while the STEAM degree was approved as part of the School of Education LIBA structure. The senate also approved three new concentrations: International Affairs in POLS, Business Analytics in BUSN and the Community Leadership and Civic Engagement (CLCE) in GENS under LIBA. The final approved concentration led to a great deal of discussion and concern regarding the purpose and direction of the LIBA degree, which will be further addressed later in this report. Finally, the Senate approved minors in Migration Studies and Cannabis Studies. While most of the above proposals were approved without debate, some raised concern. Both degrees that were associated with the General Studies LIBA had several "No" votes, and raised questions about the structural change of the original intent of LIBA as an individualized degree: the STEAM LIBA vote was 15 to 8 in favor, and the CLCE vote was 23 to 9 in favor. Moreover, there were also concerns raised about the Minor in Cannabis Studies and how it would relate to statewide issues on the legalization of marijuana. The final vote was 21 to 6 in favor. In sum, these three votes indicate that the Senate worked hard to maintain its integrity as a body and to offer thorough review of each proposals.

Task Forces

The Senate formed two task forces this year: the Task Force on Hate Speech in Academia and the Task Force on LIBA. The Task Force on Hate Speech in Academia came about due to a shift in the national climate after the election of the current President of the United States. Universities across the country, including Stockton, are now dealing with a new normal, whereby racial and cultural intolerance seem to be more vocalized. Furthermore, some specific incidents at Stockton also led students to organize and speak out. As such, the Faculty Senate President met with the Student Senate President to determine how best to address some of the emerging issues, and the

idea for the Task Force on Hate Speech in Academia was born. The Task Force was proposed to include members of a wide variety of constituencies on campus – faculty from each academic school, student affairs staff, and students from diverse student organizations (UBSS, Pride Alliance, College Republicans, etc.). At the end of this academic year, the group asked for an extension into AY18-19 to complete its work, and the Senate approved.

The Task Force on LIBA was also formed due to specific concerns. As noted above, there was a lengthy discussion about the degree proposals formed as LIBAs. The issue had also been discussed in prior years, and questions raised as to whether having schools adopt LIBA as a directed degree concentration for students would move students away from using LIBA to craft their own degrees based on individual interests. As such, the Task Force on LIBA was born in January 2018, and at the May 2018 retreat, the Task Force was approved for an extension into the AY18-19 academic year. Additionally, a motion was approved to have a moratorium on accepting new LIBA proposals until after the Task Force completed its investigation.

Additional Actions

It is important to note that the Faculty Senate did much more this year than just approve curriculum proposals and form Task Forces. The Senate also took action on several other University issues. First, the Senate restructured aspects of its own functioning style by changing its attendance policy to reflect the potential need for a senator to miss a Senate meeting due to medical or family leave.¹ Second, due to the growing number of faculty voices requesting a change in senate meeting times to one that was more “family friendly,”² the Senate Executive Committee changed the monthly meeting time of the Senate from the third Tuesday of each month (4:30 – 5:50) to the third Friday of each month (12:45 – 2). This move would allow new members to join the body who had otherwise been restricted by the later meeting times. It is also important to note that, according to the Senate Constitution, “The Executive Committee shall schedule regular meetings of the Senate

¹ More than two absences (excluding medical or family leave) from regular full Senate meetings during an academic year will constitute a vacancy. In other words, on the third absence during an academic year, the absent Senator's seat will be considered vacant, triggering the constitutional procedure for filling a vacancy in the Senate.

² Family Friendly does not only refer to senators who are parents, but also those who take care of elderly parents or have any outside responsibilities that make it difficult to stay on campus as late as 6 pm.

and publicize the dates of those meetings to the College community” (Article 5:9). As such, the Senate Executive Committee was well within its rights to make this change.

Third, the Faculty Senate unanimously approved a resolution, put forth by two long-serving faculty, to name the event room of the new academic building in Atlantic City after civil rights icon Fannie Lou Hamer. The resolution was put forth by Professor Emeritus of Philosophy and Religion Joseph Walsh and Distinguished Professor of Social Work and Africana Studies Dr. Patricia Reid-Merritt, to reflect Stockton University’s continued commitment to the legacy of Fannie Lou Hamer. It was deemed particularly fitting to name the event room in Atlantic City in Mrs. Hamer’s honor due to her historic speech in Atlantic City at the 1964 Democratic National Convention held in Boardwalk Hall. The Senate was proud and honored to support such a resolution.

Finally, the Senate approved changes to the transfer credit policy. The most significant change is that the University will now accept transfer credits from institutions outside of the state of New Jersey. This change is important if we wish to increase our number of transfer students. The Senate also approved recommendations made by the SAT Test Optional Task Force. The most significant among these recommendations was time. The Task Force recommended that the University delay the beginning of the SAT optional policy, form a task force and allow that task force to research best practices for implementation. On the other hand, if the University chose to implement sooner, the Task Forces recommended an examination of possible options for a testing center.

Discussion Items

It is clear from the items above that the Faculty Senate had a busy and active year. There were also some items discussed that are worth mentioning here, even though no specific action was taken. First, the Student Senate submitted a resolution to change the policy on repeating a course, and they requested Faculty Senate support. Their resolution was reviewed by the Academic Policies Standing Committee, and per the committee’s recommendation, the Faculty Senate did not support the resolution. At issue was the Student Senate’s request that instead of the University averaging the grades of a course taken more than once, the University should only calculate the highest grade in GPA calculations. In other words, if a student fails CHEM 2110, then retakes the course and earns a “B,” only the “B” should be calculated in the student’s GPA, rather than the average of the “F” and the “B.” The Academic Policies Committee expressed concern that such a policy change

would unfairly advantage students with greater resources, who could afford to retake a course more than once. The committee asserted that some students might “grade shop” as a result of such a policy change.

Lastly, a subgroup of the Committee on Campus Diversity and Inclusive Excellence came to discuss an initiative on “decolonizing the curriculum” with the Faculty Senate. The committee’s primary goal is to further diversify the curriculum by helping faculty to incorporate more underrepresented voices and views into their courses through a variety of readings and assignments. The committee explained that they would spend the academic year researching this endeavor, create a webpage, and then assist faculty from all disciplines in finding those diverse voices. The Senate is looking forward to hearing an update from this committee in the near future.

Final Thoughts

As previously stated above, this was a very busy and active year for the Senate, and as president, I am proud of the work we accomplished and look forward to following up on some of these important issues in the coming academic year.