

USG Faculty Council Meeting
April 17, 2020
Virtual Meeting via Blackboard Collaborate

Attendees

Those faculty representing their institution in attendance are listed below (or substitute or absent):

Representatives &/or Executive Members: AAUP: Matthew Boedy; Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College: Ryan Currie; Augusta University: Robert "Scotty" Scott & Peter Basciano (Guest); Albany State University: Richard Foreman; Atlanta Metropolitan: Babs Onabanjo; Clayton State: Mark Watson; Coastal College of Georgia: David Stasek; Columbus State: Chris McCollough; Dalton State: Matthew L. Higgs (Secretary & Representative); East Georgia State: Robert Marsh (Absent); Fort Valley State: Iheanyi Osondu; Georgia Southwestern: Stephanie Harvey; Georgia College & State College: Hauke Busch; Georgia Gwinnett: Beth Cavalier; Georgia Highlands: Julie Kozee & Lisa Branson; Georgia Southern: Helen Bland & Trish Holt (Guest); Georgia State: Michelle Brattain (Absent); Gordon: Theresa Stanley & Frank Winters (Guest); Kennesaw State University: Doug Moodie; Middle Georgia: Steven Wallace; Savannah State: Kisha Aites; South Georgia State College: Frank Pridemore (Absent); University of Georgia: Scott Pegan (Past Chair & Representative); University of North Georgia: Jamie Mitchem; University of West Georgia: Judy Butler & Angela Insenga (Guest); Georgia Tech: Joseph (Joe) Hughes (Parliamentarian); Valdosta State University: Brian Ring (Chair Elect & representative); Georgia State: Tim Brown (Webmaster); Dalton State: Sarah Mergel (Chair).

Chuck Robertson (Affiliation Unknown)

Laurie T (Affiliation Unknown)

USG Office: Chancellor, Steve Wrigley; Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs: Marti Venn; Vice Chancellor and Chief Academic Officer, Tristan Denley; Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Rebecca Corvey

Meeting called to Order by Sarah Mergel (**SM**), Chair at 10:00 A.M.

SM welcomed us to our virtual meeting and explained some of the logistical pieces of Collaborate Ultra to allow individuals to better engage with our virtual meeting.

SM made a motion to approve the Minutes from the October 2019 Meeting. She noted the minutes had been sent out in March and again in April. The motion was seconded by Beth Cavalier (**GGC**). **SM** and Joe Hughes (**GaTech**) discussed the proper mechanism for virtual voting using Roberts Rules of Order. After discussion, voting ensued. **Motion to Approve the October 2019 minutes passed unanimously.**

SM introduced the next segment of the meeting which was a discussion of key issues affecting the University System of Georgia with representatives from the USG. As Dr. Wrigley had yet to join the call, **SM** introduced Dr. Tristan Denley to begin the discussion of key USG initiatives pertinent to the USGFC.

General Education Revision

Dr. Denley began the discussion talking about the Gen Ed redesign. The last time the executive committee spoke with Dr. Denley, we talked about the intention of getting out to the campuses to have town halls. Those town halls were scheduled and shifted from 6 to 8. Those face to face meetings had to be cancelled as a result of COVID-19. As such, the entire timeline for the course redesign has been shifted to the fall (as are all the other timetables related to this). Dr. Denley plans on being on the campuses to have town halls in September/October. He is also meeting with several of the RAC's across campus. He highlighted meetings with several RAC's, and their particular opinions related to their areas of expertise. In addition, he spent some time discussing with the American History Association President his thoughts. Although the timetable has become more fluid, the system is committed to ensuring that there is ample feedback related to the structure and organization of the General Education Redesign.

- Doug Moodie (**KSU**) asked if Fall 2022 is still the target for the new Core. Dr. Denley noted that although that is the target, when we are able to approve the final structure will dictate whether or not we can actually roll out the new curriculum in the time. He notes that there are mechanisms on campus that need to happen and those take time to happen. Campuses need time to do their curricular work (with the hope of them accomplishing that by December 2021).
- Matt Hipps (**DSC**) asked about a communication strategy to the rank and file faculty on campuses. Dr. Denley noted that they had been reaching out to various constituents on campuses and to make sure that the message is being communicated consistently across campuses. Dr. Denley noted that there is no action possible to take this Spring because of the COVID-19 pandemic. As such, some forms of direct communication would be delayed until the Fall of 2020 (at the earliest).
- Steven Wallace (**MGSU**) asked about the Math/Science requirements that will be expected (including the lab requirements). Dr. Denley noted that a part of the conversation from jump has always been trying to figure out what courses are *needed* to provide the experience that students need. However, there would have to be give and take in the number of hours allotted to specific disciplines. That is what the system has to wrestle with. He specifically noted with History and Political Science and the Sciences that there would likely be some changes to credit hours allotted to those disciplines in the new curriculum based on the feedback that has been received from various constituencies.

Dr. Steven Wrigley, Chancellor, joined the conversation at 10: 08 A.M.

Dr. Wrigley began the discussion with the Coronavirus response. He thanked faculty for their willingness to make the transition to the online forum. He knows it is not easy, but we are in a different world that we are going to have to adapt to and adjust. There are several working groups. There is a working group on Fees and a Mental Health Task Force. There was the

expectation of reports this month but that is all delayed until the fall. We are continuing with remote instruction throughout the Spring and Summer. Dr. Wrigley is in communication with the state government and state public health department constantly. The plan at this point is to return to face to face instruction in the fall, but the system will stay in communication with the public health organizations within the state. The Governor has a task force discussing how that will happen, but as a system we have to talk about how we begin the semester and how we plan for potential disruptions in the fall semester. The system will provide guidance, but campuses will take the lead on these issues.

Budget/Enrollment Projects

Dr. Wrigley noted that the fiscal impact has been significant. The system, in the Spring, has a 200-million-dollar revenue reduction. Including the summer, we will be at approximately a 350+ million-dollar deficit. We don't have any indication of what the state will do in terms of funding. The Senate passed a revised budget (which funds the system until June 30). We are still discussing the Critical Hiring Process. The USG has not gotten any direction that they are reducing funding related to those processes. The FY 21 budget passed the House, but has not been approved by the legislature, but we will not know until they reconvene. However, projections for revenue are showing some potential declines. So, we don't really have an idea what the FY 21 budget looks like, so we are all waiting on that information. CARES act funding was about 250 million system wide. Half has to go directly to students, so the actual amount going to the system wide institutions is about 125 million dollars. Funding for the students has already been distributed, money to the campuses has not been distributed from the federal government. That funding will help some though it will not be enough, and the USG is urging the Governor and delegates to increase funding for the USG system schools. This happened during the Great Recession and it helped, and the hope is they are willing to look at that again. Until we get a FY 21 budget it is difficult to make projections about things that will happen.

Institutions are being encouraged to keep up their enrollment. We all need to play a role in helping to increase enrollment at our institutions. Dr. Wrigley asked us all to reach out to our campus leaders to see what role that we can play in increasing enrollments on our respective campuses.

- Beth Cavalier (**GGC**) asked questions about the decision to not move to a pass/fail option for Spring. Dr. Wrigley noted that there are issues for HOPE Scholars, future admissions, SAACS is not comfortable with it, GPA Calculations and Dr. Wrigley noted that he was concerned about rigor and standards and the perception of those things from students. He noted that there are challenges in face to face classrooms. He also noted that we don't know how this is going to look in the future and there was concern about moving to pass/fail for longer than a semester. Dr. Denley added that the bottom line is that there were too many unknowns to move to this system because there could be unintended academic consequences, including transfer. Dr. Denley noted that Harvard Medical School was not going to accept fully pass/fail in their calculations for

admissions.

- Steven Wallace (**MGSU**) inquired about enrollment being a major category in the budget allocation formulas, will there be an adjustment for what will obviously be a dip for most if not all campuses? Dr. Wrigley asked for clarification in the question. **MGSCU** clarified that as budget allocations are contingent on past years, how are we going to adjust our budgets moving forward based on this COVID-19 epidemic. Dr. Wrigley noted the funding formula is enrollment and credit hour driven and it's a zero-sum game. The request to the Legislature includes that information about increases and decreases in enrollment, but at this point that is the way that the formula works. Unless the state decides to supplement money, we are likely to be affected by COVID-19 enrollment decreases. Budget projections make this appear to be unlikely. When enrollment is down, they tend to not allot extra money to the USG. Dr. Wrigley noted they will ask, but there is no guarantee.
- Scott Pegan (**UGA**), asked about the state budget policies are being interpreted as any state funds have to be "essential" to include those expenses spent on research. The problem being that many faculty haven't had time to spend down their flow backs and internal monies to maintain their laboratories. This is placing faculty in positions where they are looking at losing significant funds because they were told not spend for the last few months if not on COVID-19 and now they are being told they can't spend it at all. Scott noted that will create some issues with research moving forward and potential productivity. Dr. Wrigley noted that is likely a UGA decision, that isn't coming from the USG. Campuses are making those decisions ultimately. 51% of Georgia's general revenue come from general income tax. 27% comes from sales taxes. If economic activity is decreasing that will be impactful on state revenues.
- Angela Insenga (**UWG**), asked two questions. First, you indicated that each campus will lead the decision on whether or not to reopen in fall. Does this mean that, hypothetically, some campuses could be open, and others would not? The Chancellor noted that there would be a system decision so the system would be acting as one. Additionally, is there a decision in the works to teach in-person but NOT have residential occupants for public health concerns--so a "middle ground" of sorts? The Chancellor again noted that the decision to open campuses would be a system wide decision and further guidance would be given in accordance with consultation with the State and public health officials.
- Jamie Mitchem (**UNG**), asked If we are able to return to face-to-face teaching in the fall semester, what protections would faculty and staff who are in high risk groups have if they don't feel safe being in classes or meetings? How do we protect the safety of our vulnerable groups moving forward? The Chancellor noted that they are working closely with public health people, but the USG system had 2800 courses with 50 or more people in them. The Chancellor asked for people to send any suggestions/concerns to Sarah

and that she would forward them onto him. The Chancellor noted that we should be prepared for significant disruptions for the next 12-18 months.

- Beth Cavalier (**GGC**) mentioned that \$125 million has to go directly to students and the other half goes to campuses. How closely will the System be controlling the spending of CARES money, and what are the plans for communicating how it will be used? Dr. Wrigley noted that most of the money goes from the DOE to the institutions then to the students. The DOE said that they will issue guidelines about how that money can and should be spent. They are not sure of timelines but noted that the USG does not have much control over how those funds are able to be spent.
- Robert “Scotty” Scott (**AU**), asked about furloughs. The Chancellor noted that without the budget information it is difficult to really comment on those issues. There aren’t any indications of how funding will be appropriated for the FY 21.
- Steven Wallace (**MGSU**) asked about health insurance benefits. Specifically, would there be a chance for some faculty to change their plans to include something like "long-term leave" which they didn't opt in for during open enrollment last November? Dr. Wrigley said he doesn’t anticipate another open enrollment period.

Annual Evaluation/Promotion/Tenure (e) Shared Governance Concerns

- Bring Ring (**VSU**) asked Is there a moratorium on annual faculty and staff evaluations due to this pandemic? Maybe this needs to be a USG decision so individual institutions are not holding different standards? Dr. Denley noted that individual campuses have a lot of influence over how the standards work on their specific campuses. Presidents have the ability to affect those tenure clocks and standards, and he feels that campus presidents can make those decisions. Also teaching evaluations are being handled campus by campus. Peter Basciano (**AU-Guest**), asked does the flexibility on P&T extend to pre-tenure and post tenure reviews? Dr. Denley noted that yes, it should extend to these processes.
- Bring Ring (**VSU**) asked how we can be helpful. Dr. Wrigley noted that we should engage with our campus leaders about how to keep our enrollments up during this difficult time. He also noted that we need to keep making progress in the online world. We need to share problems but also share solutions. They really need faculty to engage in that part of the world, so that we are able to improve the online learning experience for our students. Dr. Denley noted that there are campus reports being run daily in an attempt to ensure that students are engaging in the online learning session. They are trying to differentiate out the reasons why students are not engaging in the course materials.
- Matt Hipps (**DSC**) asked about the USG response to the speed with which things are changing is there specific attention paid to encouraging institutions to remember to

engage in shared governance. Dr. Wrigley noted that he has spoken to Presidents about this but that he will be more specific in how he reminds Presidents of the need for shared governance. Dr. Denley noted that he would communicate that message to the VPAA's during his communications.

- Brian Ring (**VSU**) asked about updates on athletics in the USG. Dr. Wrigley said that they don't know about athletics and that is usually a decision made outside of the USG system office. However, he noted that no one is really sure what August and September will look like, so we are in a holding pattern of sorts.
- Dou Moodie (**KSU**) asked about the decisions being made during the Summer by the USG, how would they communicate with the USGFC during the Summer. As soon as there are some more communications between entities above the USG, they would continue to converse with the USGFC regarding processes and procedures related to academics.
- Babs Onabanjo (**ATLM**) asked would the system favor or encourage virtual graduation commencement for the Spring 2020? Dr. Wrigley noted that they have left that up to individual institutions and praised the creativity of institutions in trying to aid students in making an experience for students. He noted how much he hates this loss for our students and their families.
- Jamie Mitchem (**UNG**) asked about construction on campuses. The Chancellor noted that those ongoing constructions should continue. GFIC have been providing guidance on keeping construction projects moving along. As for the budget regarding new construction, we still have not seen those numbers, so we don't have a lot of information. The House budget was favorable to the system, we are not sure about the final bill. The Chancellor is optimistic that part of the budget will continue to be invested in, but he doesn't have any concrete information.
- Brian Ring (**VSU**) asked as students stay online across our region, any concerns about students taking transient courses outside USG? The Chancellor noted that some of those online institutions are very good at that, but we can be better. If students are getting what they are looking for, then he believes that they will stay. There are going to be challenges with social distancing on campuses. It is challenging because college campuses are really the opposite of social distancing, so that presents some unique challenges.

This concluded discussion around USG initiatives and key items pertinent to the USGFC. Dr. Wrigley offered a heartfelt thanks to the faculty and the USGFC for our roles in this transition and urged us to reach out to him if we have any questions, concerns or suggestions.

Discussion of USGFC Elections/Officers 2020-2021

SM noted we needed to discuss elections to the Executive Board and how those processes would work. Joe Hughes (**GATECH**) noted that given the timing and nature of the meeting that conducting our officer elections in the normal way was likely not viable. As such, Joe created a proposal that allows for remote voting for our positions. We wanted to follow the spirit of our elections, but also trying to do so in a concise matter.

GATECH moved that we accept the proposal. Motion seconded by **GGC** and **MGSU**. The discussion is to allow people to self-nominate, or to be nominated by the group. The plan is to have the election, and we have to follow the bylaws in the process of voting. [See Attachment for the specific process]

GATECH asked for comments and discussion: **SM** noted that you are eligible to run even if you are rotating off of the council for a position on the council. There was a friendly amendment made by **DSC** to allow people to self-nominate (or be nominated) for whatever position they wish to run for. The friendly amendment was accepted by **GATECH**.

Motion to accept the proposal with the friendly amendments was made by **GATECH**. Seconded by **GGC** and **MCSU**. The motion was passed unanimously.

Discussion of New Business

SM noted that we need to find a location to meet in the fall (assuming that we can meet in the Fall). We can make some determinations about where to be in the Fall. **SM** also reminded folks that as we make transitions to the new USGFC it is important to figure out some processes to indicate who will be serving on the USGFC.

- Robert Scott (**AU**) will not be the voting member, but he wants to remind folks about Paid Parental leave and talking about that as a point of consideration.
- **UGA** noted that the COVID-19 made it difficult to make any progress regarding the summer pay recommendation.
- There was more conversation surrounding Healthcare and whether or not there should be a response from the USGFC regarding COVID-19 being a “life change” to try to encourage the Total Rewards Steering Committee to consider this. Discussion ensued and **SM** agreed that she would follow up with Karin Snider.
- **SM** agreed to follow up on the 33 1/3 limitation on faculty in the Summer. Discussion ensued about a system policy for faculty regarding summer contracts and notification surrounding the contracts of faculty. The system helped facilitate a survey and we are going to try to take the information that we have and create a resolution but were

unable to get around to it given the disruption of COVID-19.

- **GGC** asked about furloughs and how that would be implemented (system wide versus campus driven). Discussion ensued that furloughs are possible and that they are largely driven by individual campuses and their particular situations. We noted that our contracts have language that note that furloughs are possible.
- Helen Bland (**GaSo**) asked about pay over 12 months. **SM** noted that the system is telling us that we cannot do it. The administrative tax burden was too great for the USG to manage. We were told initially that as long as we were on the same system, we could do it. However, we have been told that it is simply not possible. He noted that IRS complications arise due to a contract spanning multiple fiscal years. **VSU** noted that summer teaching and grants would also complicate the 12-month pay cycle.
- **VSU** also noted that there are some issues with closed presidential searches and that this is an issue with AAUP also. **SM** noted that she would ensure that these topics would be parsed out of the chat to ensure that we took care of all those topics.

Noting no further discussion, **SM** thanked us for our time and attention to the meeting today.

Meeting Adjourned at 11:59 A.M.

Attachment: Approved Election Proposal

Process for Election of 2020-21 USGFC Officers

*This proposal, with one amendment as incorporated herein,
was approved by the USGFC on April 17, 2020.*

The USGFC Bylaws specify that elections are to be held during the Spring meeting to elect the Chair-Elect, Secretary/Treasurer, Parliamentarian, and IT Coordinator for the coming year. Because of the change in timing and structure of the Spring 2020 meeting, it is proposed to conduct this election following the meeting using email nominations and voting.

Sections IV.2, IV.4, IV.5, and IV.6 of the Bylaws define the officers, their duties, terms, and elections, respectively. General voting information, defined in Article VI, specifies that officers are to be elected using combined (rather than tier) voting.

Proposed process for election of 2020-21 officers:

1. In order to encourage participation, individuals may self-nominate for multiple officer positions.
 2. By **Friday, April 24**, those wishing to be candidates must self-nominate by sending an email* containing their name, title, institution and position(s) for which they wish to be a candidate. Optionally, a half-page statement of interest and goals may be provided.
 3. By **Friday, May 1**, a ballot will be prepared listing all candidates for each officer position along with a document containing all of the candidate statements. These will be emailed to all voting members of the USGFC.
 4. By **Friday, May 15**, members will complete their ballot, using ranked-choice voting (see below) for each position, and email* it back.
 5. The vote for Chair-Elect will be tabulated first, followed in order by Secretary/Treasurer, Parliamentarian, and IT Coordinator. If the winner of a race is also a candidate in a subsequent race, he/she will no longer be considered in that other race.
- * Self-nominations and ballots are to be emailed to all of the current officers not eligible to run for any positions: Sarah Mergel <smergel@daltonstate.edu>, Brian Ring <bcring@valdosta.edu>, and Scott Pegan <spegan@uga.edu>.

Ranked-choice voting provides automatic runoffs to ensure majority approval of the eventual winner. Voters rank all candidates for a position. A candidate who receives a majority of the first-place votes is declared the winner. Otherwise, the candidate who received the fewest first-place votes is dropped and those votes are reallocated to the next highest-ranking candidate on each such ballot. This process continues until someone wins a majority. Similarly, if the winner of a race is a candidate in a subsequent race, he/she will no longer be considered and the ranking of other votes on those ballots will be shifted accordingly.