Shared Governance Council (SGC)
Meeting Minutes
October 30, 2024, 12:15 p.m.

Attending: President John B. Cook (Ex Officio); Sharay Salters (President, Student Government Association - SGA); Professor Christina Atwater (AUC Faculty Co-Chair); Professor Ashley Pease (Guest; AUC Committee Chair); Kim Noel (AFSCME Steward); Professor Renae Gorman (MCCC/PA President); Vice President Andrea Nathanson (Cabinet); Vice President Mary Kaselouskas (Cabinet); Vice President Darcey Kemp (Cabinet); Vice President Chris Thuot (Cabinet)

Nanette Flores (Executive Assistant to the President; minutes)

Introductions

Review of previous meeting minutes (May 2024):

Both the AUC rep, as well as MCCC rep, asked for more detail in minutes. While it was previously discussed that minutes are not a transcript, both Chris Atwater and Renae Gorman would like to see more detail in the questions/comments section of a given item. Referring to the last line on p. 1 of the May minutes regarding the "discussion on implementation" as an example – "students will not be charged for accumulated credits." Professor Atwater also suggested adding that it is a "best practice that students are not charged per credit." It was clarified that minutes are in fact, draft, until a final consultation at the subsequent SGC meeting.

Outstanding/Pending/Potential Recommendations/Proposals

Commencement Regalia:

AUC Chair confirmed that the Commencement Regalia proposal was indeed submitted for SGC consideration in May;

Further clarified that the proposal is not a policy change; it is not intended to govern what students can or cannot do with regalia at Commencement. The term "catalog" or "inventory" was discussed as a potential descriptor for "what" this proposal represents. In part because of this question (what is the proposal), there were questions when the AUC via committee, first engaged in vetting. Andrea Tarpey, Coordinator of Student Activities, was invited to a second meeting of the AUC Committee; some of questions were to do with student freedom of expression. Professor Atwater also shared how faculty appreciate the creative ways students use regalia to celebrate at Commencement.

For clarification, Dr. Cook asked, if this is not a policy change, under what category should it be considered? Vice President Kemp (Student Affairs), sees the importance of categorizing it as operational within the division of Student Affairs. Dr. Cook followed: is the proposal ready for SGC consideration? AUC will resend the proposal on Student/Commencement Regalia; President Cook will ensure the recommendation is on the next SGC meeting agenda for due consideration.

Credit for Prior Learning Recommendation:

Ashley Pease (in her role as Chair of the AUC Academic Standing Committee) met with VPAA Chris Thuot and both agreed on the following language for the proposal:

> "*Qualified faculty in each discipline will define the course criteria and assess fulfillment to determine the credit awarded with final approval by the appropriate Division Dean, as the representative of Academic Affairs*".

Professor Pease observed that where the course "lives," is how the decision is made. As context per a question from the SGC Student representative, a background and example of Credit for Prior Learning was provided. Also: the NECHE threshold regarding the percentage of credits allowed was clarified:

> *(NECHE Standard Four/4.39)*
> *Credit for prior experiential or non-collegiate sponsored learning is awarded only with appropriate oversight by faculty and academic administration and is limited to 25% for credentials of 30 credits or fewer. When credit is awarded on the basis of prior experiential or non-collegiate sponsored learning alone, student learning and achievement are demonstrated to be at least comparable in breadth, depth, and quality to the results of institutionally provided learning experiences. The policies and procedures for the award of credit for prior or experiential learning are clearly stated and available to affected students.*

AUC Chair offered: there is a value in having the opportunity to bring unfinished proposals forward to the SGC so that constituent representatives, such as the SGA leader, have time to better understand. President Cook will ensure the updated/revised Credit for Prior Learning proposal is on the next SGC meeting agenda for due consideration.

Open Discussion: Developing a Shared Governance Crosswalk (*draft* flowchart shared)

For context, President Cook first commented how STCC had come a long way in terms of shared governance. As evidence, NECHE removal of the Notice of Concern related to this area is a demonstration, and with examples provided in our reports, show the ways STCC has now been deemed to be meeting the standard. With that said, Dr. Cook noted that having a visual reference for use by respective governance bodies with their stakeholders would be helpful. This could include a crosswalk through policy/program/curricular development. President Cook had spoken in advance by phone with both Professor Gorman as well as Professor Atwater on this topic. Also, in anticipation of the upcoming All-College Town Hall, a question might be proposed about shared governance, so again, having a visual aid would be helpful.

Sharing a draft set of slides, with the caveat that they were not done by a professional graphic designer, a flowchart, along with associated context from NECHE, were reviewed for three areas of shared governance (again: policy/program/curricular). Also shared were examples, and how they mapped/flowed toward a final decision:

> 2017/2018 Health Science Degree
>
> 2023/2024 Revised Withdrawal Policy
>
> 2023/2024 Smoke/Vape-Free Campus Policy

The following quote also served as a bookend to the crosswalk review:

> "It is clearly impractical to involve *every* administrator and *every* faculty member in *every* step of shared governance. Instead, colleges and universities typically rely on committees with representatives of each group engaging in much of the work of shared governance."
> Renshaw, K. (2.19.2023). "5 Steps for Successful Shared Governance." Inside Higher Ed: online.

Professor Atwater commented about the ellipses (…) used on the first slide, and the desire to see included reference to the report issued by the governance consultant. A subsequent line of dialogue with President Cook included a discussion of how literal to interpret the motion by the Board of Trustees ["accepts the report and recommendations"], as opposed to a symbolic interpretation given that three explicit, and codified elements were later described in the motion ["be it resolved that the following clarifies roles and responsibilities"]. [Note also that the motion states that the SGC will serve as "a conduit that ensures college-wide feedback," indicating that STCC's Board of Trustees adopted a shared governance structure that provides multiple entry points for gathering college-wide feedback.]

Professor Atwater reiterated a request for a manual and that these flow charts can be a beginning to developing that manual. Dr. Cook noted that based on the feedback from this SGC meeting, he would not bring these slides to the November Town Hall – it would be premature.

Specific to the curriculum flowchart, or the program flowchart, as they both were drafted, broadly speaking, no consensus-level issue from the Shared Governance Council for how those represent the process were identified. With the draft curriculum development slide, the AUC Co-Chair did express a desire to see a more robust representation. This included a desire to capture the roles/engagement by Deans in the process, as well as Chairs/Coordinators, and a mention about whether and if part-time (DCE) faculty, not only full-time faculty, can initiate and present curricular proposals to the Curriculum Committee.

Specific to the policy image as drafted:

Professor Atwater offered the following:

> Work done "to the left" – meaning prior to the Shared Governance Council, is not adequately represented;

> How relevant perspectives are considered is not clear; it would be good to capture dissenting opinion in the flow/image, including as well, when and how Trustees discuss a recommendation;

> There has been limited discussion of shared governance at recent Trustee meetings; an effort should be made. Professor Atwater shared that she spoke to Dr. Cook about this, and he encouraged AUC to prepare an overview for Internal/External [Committee] of governance activities [correction: President Cook invited the AUC Co-Chair to submit an "Annual Report" or something akin specific to AUC work, including number of committee meetings held, etc., and that such a report could be submitted toward the end of a given year to capture AUC work done over that year].

Questions also about Cabinet, given framing in the Consultant's report. Dr. Thuot spoke about the role and responsibility of administrators in effecting policy, including consideration of implementation implications on whether and how drafted recommendations/proposals move forward. Professor Atwater commented that this feedback process is not captured in the flowchart.

Additional prompts and questions about the policy slide had to do with labels, clarification of roles (which groups can submit recommendations; whether the unions are advisory; how to clarify notions of constituencies), and broadly speaking, how to represent iteration in the process.

A broad conversation commenced about the Revised Withdrawal Policy [approved March/2024; a comprehensive Memo with rationale remains available on the public shared governance webpage], including remaining discontent from some faculty members about the absence of an avenue that would administratively withdraw a student at mid-term [note: at the October 2024 Chairs/Coordinators meeting, Dr. Thuot shared an outline of the full policy implementation timeline]. Also revisited was how Dr. Thuot and Dr. Cook met with the AUC Coordinating Committee regarding how the final Withdrawal policy landed. Dr. Thuot commented that although he was not part of the introduction of the Withdrawal revision recommendation, the element that was not ultimately included in the final policy (administrative withdrawal at mid-term for absences plus failing) did not come up at the Spring SGC meetings when the proposal was discussed. He noted that the final policy, while not universally supported, was thoroughly reviewed by various bodies, and recommendations were duly considered by the President consistent with shared governance principles.

In her role as representative of the SGA, Ms. Salters expressed support for the policy as finalized, noting that students she has heard from were negatively impacted by the previous policy.

President Cook asked Professor Pease: how would she like to proceed? It remains unclear if the AUC Academic Standing Committee wishes to revisit the current Withdrawal Policy and generate a new or revised recommendation in light of implementation.

The SGA President asked if students sit on AUC Committees.

Next Meeting Date: TBD as needed

Meeting ended at 1:36p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,
Nanette Flores