

MINUTES

FACULTY SENATE – SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

Wednesday, December 13, 2023, 3 p.m.

Altgeld Hall 125

Northern Illinois University

DeKalb, Illinois

VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT: Arado, Atkins, Barrett, Books, McGowan, Nyunt, Staikidis (for Scanlon), Vahedian

VOTING MEMBERS ABSENT: Bohanon, Johnson

OTHERS PRESENT: Creed, Elish-Piper, Flynn, Silva Tovar, Sumner

I. CALL TO ORDER

Faculty Senate (FS) President **B. Creed** called the meeting to order at 3:01 p.m.

II. VERIFICATION OF QUORUM

A quorum was verified.

III. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

T. Atkins moved to adopt the agenda, seconded by **A. Vahedian**. Motion passed.

IV. APPROVAL OF THE OCTOBER 18, 2023, MINUTES – Pages 2-5

T. Arado moved to approve the minutes, seconded by **B. McGowan**. Motion passed.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT

VI. ITEMS FOR FS-SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION

- A. Division of Academic Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
Carol Sumner, Chief Diversity Officer
Jade Silva Tovar, Associate VP for DEI
Joseph Flynn, Executive Director for Equity and Inclusion

Carol Sumner, Joseph Flynn and Jade Silva Tovar engaged in a conversation about their work, priorities and possible opportunities for FS and FS-Social Justice Committee (SJC) to collaborate with Academic Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (ADEI) and for ADEI to collaborate with FS/FSSJC.

Discussion included:

- DEI is an uncompromised value at NIU.
- Ensuring our discussion, work and definition of DEI includes not just race/ethnicity, but all facets of diversity such as socioeconomic status, gender, native language, geographic and contextual, sexual orientation and so on.
- The work must be part of the academic center of the university, not as distinct from the rest of the work, but as core to the work.
- Shared about NIU's status as an emerging Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) and what all goes into earning and remaining HSI status.
- Shared that we are close to the threshold of being an Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-serving Institution.
- Necessity of having shared language and definitions to operate with, clearly defined roles and responsibilities and knowledge of what folks are doing across campus.
- Discussed social justice as being not just racial justice, but inclusive of indigenous justice, decolonial justice, disability justice, environmental justice and others.
- Discussion of GIVE Circles.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Proposal to update FS Bylaws, Article 8, The Academic Personnel Process, based on the work of the FS Social Justice Committee

Discussion included the following points:

- **B. Creed** shared overview of the work which has gone into the development of the proposed updates:
 - Including the work of faculty members Xiaodan Hu, Dan McConkie, David Maki, Chris Scanlon, Benjamin Creed, Gudran Nyunt, Sheila Barrett, Therese Arado, graduate assistant Jess Elem, and completed under the leadership of SJC chairs Ismael Montana and David Valentinier.
 - Work was grounded in achieving three goals:
 - **Equitable tenure and promotion (T&P) system;**
 - **Retaining local control of decision making in T&P process;**
 - **Alignment of T&P system with University goals.**
 - Work included focus groups with faculty, conversations at each college council and their equivalents, with the faculty union, with senior leadership, with FS Personnel Committee, learning through workshops, readings and research, professional development and document analysis.
 - Slides showing visual representation of the changes were presented.
 - Shared that the proposed changes would be part of a larger package of changes aimed at making the FS Bylaws governing tenure and promotion more inclusive, modern and expanding what is considered as valid and valued contributions of faculty members at NIU, and ultimately in better

alignment with the university’s mission vision and values. One of these changes is related to clinical and research faculty. With that in mind, it was shared that the final language the FS will receive with the passage of this proposal might be slightly different, but the core changes will remain.

- **T. Arado** identified language in Article 8.4 as problematic which discussed the T&P guidelines faculty members are governed by, specifically: “The criteria to be used for the evaluation shall be those guidelines for tenure most recently published by the academic unit in which the applicant holds a tenure-track appointment.” It was agreed that this language could use review by the Faculty Senate Personnel Committee to ensure faculty members do not have the rules/expectations change midway through the process of obtaining tenure in a way that would harm their progress. It was agreed that faculty members ought to have choice if they want to use the most current guidelines OR those which they were hired under.

T. Atkins moved that the proposal to update the FS Bylaws in alignment with the work of the FS-SJC be considered. **T. Arado** seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Continued discussion of work plans for 2023-24

Discussion included:

- Need for review of the FS Bylaws to ensure there is inclusive representative language in the FS Bylaws and then make a recommendation to the University Council chair for a similar activity to be undertaken for the NIU Constitution and Bylaws.
 - A first read through has been conducted with several areas flagged for consideration.
 - **B. Creed** asked for two or three FSSJC members to volunteer to engage in this effort early in the Spring semester.
- The need for a review of the promotion and tenure process outlined in the Board of Trustees (BOT) Bylaws and Regulations to clarify the role of the BOT in promotion and tenure, if there is a need to deemphasize faculty discipline and otherwise make suggestions related to the bylaws and regs.
 - **B. Creed** asked for one or two FSSJC members to work with him on this.

B. Continued discussion of priorities

C. Faculty Senate Bylaws, Article 3.5, Social Justice Committee – Page 16

Discussion included a revisiting of the proposed changes to Article 3.5 of the FS Bylaws. Feedback was asked for and a proposal will be brought to the February 7 FSSJC to amend the language based on any feedback received.

- D. Overview of work within the domain of the Faculty Senate and the Faculty Senate Social Justice Committee
Ben Creed, FS President

This was postponed until the February 7 FSSJC meeting.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

T. Arado moved to adjourn, seconded by **A. Vahedian**. Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.