

## 2011-12 FGCU Faculty Senate Annual Report April 26, 2012

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### Introduction

The purpose of this report is to document the efforts and achievements of the FGCU Faculty Senate in the 2011-12 academic year and to provide context and reflection on the effectiveness of the Faculty Senate Governance System in the shared governance of the University.

### Background

The Florida Gulf Coast Faculty Senate was created as “a system of collegial faculty self-governance that ensure[s] the rights of faculty are supported and the responsibilities of faculty in fulfilling the mission of the university are met” ([Founding Faculty Senate Philosophy](#)). The Faculty Senate Governance System comprises the [Faculty Senate](#), the [Senate Executive Leadership](#) (officers of the Senate), all [standing teams](#) and [committees](#), and the [Senate Leadership Team](#) (SLT, composed of the facilitators of standing teams).

As outlined in the [Faculty Senate Governance Document](#), the “Faculty Senate is the decision-making body for FGCU faculty governance. The standing teams make recommendations to the Senate, which has final authority. The Senate may enact resolutions on any matter affecting the academic mission of the University, and speaks for the faculty on matters of concern. It is the responsibility of the senators to communicate with and get feedback from the constituents in their unit. The means of communication [are] determined by the senate representatives in each unit.

“The Faculty Senate engages in collegial dialog with the President of the University, the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs and others in positions of administrative leadership in order to pursue and refine the mission of the University. Collaborative and shared leadership among all university constituents is critical to creating a campus environment conducive to advancing student achievement. Fairness, mutual respect, continuous improvement, an informed faculty, and collegial decision-making are the hallmarks of the governance structure.”

### Standing Teams and Committees

*Standing Teams:* The Standing Teams of the Faculty Senate are responsible for direct oversight of key areas of faculty responsibility and involvement. These include curriculum, program review, grants and research activities, institutional and faculty affairs, and other domains related to curriculum, instruction, and faculty governance. The composition and scope of team responsibilities are described in the [Faculty Senate Bylaws](#). Teams receive and/or identify agenda items from three primary sources: the

team's elected faculty membership, the Faculty Senate Executive Leadership (either acting as a relay for concerns from the faculty at large or conveying action from the Faculty Senate), and ex-officio administrative members of the committee.

Each Team documents its workload and progress on a Work Plan that tracks goals, action steps, timeline, membership responsibilities and the final status of or accomplishments related to each goal. Appendix 1 compiles this year's Work Plans for standing teams and details the associated goals and results (see also Accountability Initiatives, Senate Team Work Plans and Reporting, Page 7 below).

*Standing Committees:* Additionally, [standing committees](#) of the Faculty Senate provide peer review of competitive or selective grant, sabbatical, and excellence awards administered through the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and/or implemented as part of Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Administration and the United Faculty of Florida-FGCU chapter.

*New Groups in 2011-12:* This year, the Faculty Senate operationalized a new standing team – the Appointments Team – and created a new committee – the Senate Planning and Budget Advisory Committee (SPBAC).

The Appointments Team [was created](#) at the end of the 2010-11 year as a way to regularize the nomination and/or appointment of faculty representatives to University-wide non-Senate committees. Previously, Faculty Senate Executive Leadership had served as an unofficial ad-hoc nominating committee for all requests from the FGCU President or his designees for appointees or nominees to represent faculty on bodies such as the Planning and Budget Council, the Parking Committee, or the University Athletics Committee. The creation of the Appointments Team has allowed the Faculty Senate to establish a more transparent and reliable process for seeking nominees and appointees (for Appointments Team Selection Process and Guidelines, see [here](#)). For instance, this year for the first time, nominations for faculty representatives to Planning and Budget Council and its affiliated committees were solicited and accepted online (see also Elections and Appointments Processes, Page 8 below).

The key challenges in implementing the Appointments Team this year have been in grappling with the sheer number – and the highly dispersed nature – of non-Senate committees that exist on campus at the University level, and then identifying which of these committees requires or needs faculty representation. Relatedly, there is also the understandable lack of awareness of the Appointment Team's existence, given its newness, and its role in relation to the relevant Administrative Divisions in which non-Senate committees are located. In a few cases in which an Administrative Division asked for faculty nominees or appointees for non-Senate University committee service, the request came with a near-term deadline that complicated the Appointment Team's ability to adhere to its own process. There were also instances in which Faculty Senate Leadership and Administration didn't share sufficiently clear understandings of what was being asked and what was to be provided by whom – though these unclarities diminished and a common understanding of the process began to emerge as the year progressed.

Faculty Senate Executive Leadership will continue to work with the University President and Vice Presidents to raise awareness of the Team's function and process, which should become better known and more naturalized over time, thus addressing this cluster of concerns.

These expected challenges notwithstanding, the faculty response in general to the Appointment Team's formation and operation has been largely positive (see Appendix 2). The Faculty Senate Executive Leadership has been relieved of a substantial workload, and more important, non-Senate service opportunities at the University level are more widely publicized, increasing the likelihood that service roles and faculty aptitudes and interests are more closely aligned.

The SPBAC was created at the recommendation of the Faculty Senate Executive Leadership. The SPBAC is composed of all in-unit faculty representatives appointed by the University President to serve on the PBC and its affiliated committees. Though some connections between Faculty Senate Governance and the PBC processes existed prior to the formation of the SPBAC (most notably between the PBC's Information Resources Committee and the Faculty Senate Technology Team), no systematic or reliable mechanism for accountability and support of Faculty Senate representatives to the PBC has existed since the PBC's formation in 2009. In authorizing the formation of the SPBAC, the Senate indicated a desire to increase the communication and coordination between Faculty Senate and the PBC (for a diagram mapping the relationships between Faculty Senate and PBC, see Appendix 3).

The biggest challenge facing the success of the SPBAC relates to the broader question of how the PBC lives out its function "as the university's coordinating body for organized efforts ... to implement the Florida Gulf Coast University's Strategic Plan" (see [PBC bylaws](#)). This topic has been discussed at various meetings of the PBC this year; PBC members continue to refine their understanding of the balance between the council's advisory function to the Cabinet and their representative responsibilities to the stakeholder groups for whom they speak. The SPBAC has addressed this balance in [its operating guidelines](#), drawing from the Faculty Senate Bylaws, which state that the SPBAC shall, among other things, be responsible for:

- Coordinating regular communication and consultation between its members and the Faculty Senate and Faculty Senate Leadership Team;
- Contacting and consulting with relevant Standing Teams of the Faculty Senate for input, feedback, or other comment when deemed necessary or prudent on issues associated with the University planning and budgeting processes.

This commitment has already been put into practice in the short time since the SPBAC was created and began meeting in January 2012. Particularly, the SPBAC has proven to be an effective means of routing information from and soliciting faculty feedback to the PBC: examples include the coordination of faculty involvement in the selection of a new Learning Management System; faculty feedback on concerns over conservation land use associated with revisions to the FGCU Master Plan; and faculty input into ideas for space

utilization as part of a larger campus conversation on challenges related to space constraints, budget cuts, and enrollment growth (see Appendix 4).

### **Leadership Initiatives**

In addition to its regular business handled through Standing Teams and Committees, the Faculty Senate this year focused on three Leadership Initiatives coordinated by the Faculty Senate Executive Leadership:

1. *Implementation of a Survey of Faculty Perceptions of Chairs' and Deans' Performance.* This initiative involved working jointly with our partners in the administration to refine and implement a version of a survey developed by the Faculty Senate's Faculty Affairs Team and adopted by the Senate in Spring 2011. Representatives of the Council of Deans, the Council of Chairs, and Faculty Senate worked together over the fall to refine this instrument and the survey process, and the survey was successfully delivered earlier this semester (see documentation [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#)). Unit-level results [are available](#) for faculty on each unit's share drive.

It is encouraging that at a post-survey debriefing in April 2012, all parties involved agreed to continue this effort in the coming year, with particular focus on extending the survey to allow in-unit academic advisors to evaluate their direct supervisors. In addition to increasing the survey's inclusiveness and refining aspects of the instrument, there are also opportunities to improve participation rates. Of the faculty eligible to participate, the survey had a 46% overall participation rate (43% for deans; 50% for chairs). Several factors may help account for this rate:

- Timing: given the time necessary to build a secure and sustainable system for delivering the survey, delivery of this year's survey stretched across Spring Break. Earlier delivery will avoid this conflict and provide more calendric distance between delivering the survey and the deadline for chairs and deans to have rendered promotion decisions.
- Lack of acculturation: this year's survey was an entirely new experience for the many FGCU faculty who have been hired since Spring 2007, when the last survey was administered. And among those faculty who have participated in previous surveys, surveying faculty perceptions of chairs' and deans' performance has not yet occurred with enough frequency to establish itself as a fixture of the academic culture.
- Use of survey results: faculty feedback suggests that participation rates may in part be linked to how meaningfully the survey results are perceived to be used to improve the quality of academic supervision on campus.

Each of these factors is most effectively addressed by refinements to and repeated administrations of the survey, which remain the focus of the tripartite workgroup devoted to this effort. The overarching goal of the faculty and administrators working together to bring about this evaluation opportunity has been and continues to be the generation of meaningful data that can have a positive effect on the professional development of academic supervisors.

2. *The Faculty Senate Outcomes and Assessment Task Force (OATF)*. The OATF was established at the beginning of the 2011-12 academic year to develop and express the faculty's position on the superordinate student learning outcomes that all academic programs are accountable to deliver and assess (see [letter to faculty from Faculty Senate President](#), August 13, 2011). Seven in-unit faculty representatives formed the core of the task force and were elected by faculty in each of the seven colleges/units. The Task Force was chaired by Dr. Judy R. Wilkerson, Professor of Research and Assessment in the College of Education, an internationally recognized expert and authority on learning outcomes and assessment in higher education and a regular consultant for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools on this topic (see [letter to faculty from Faculty Senate President](#), August 22, 2011). Faculty members were joined on the OATF by three ex-officio representatives from Academic Affairs.

The OATF deliberated on the status of existing University Student Learning Outcomes (see OATF Appendices [C](#) and [D](#)) and engaged the faculty at large directly in multiple ways: most notably, through an online survey in November that asked faculty to indicate their level of engagement in teaching and assessing current SLOs, and in the Spring 2012 semester, through college-/unit-level conversations led by the faculty representative to the OATF from that college/unit. The results of the survey are summarized beginning on Page 15 of [OATF Appendix D](#); the unit-level conversations are summarized in faculty reports collected in [OATF Appendix F](#).

The OATF delivered a final [Report and Recommendations](#) to the Faculty Senate in April. After extended debate, the Senate ratified the report, as presented, without amendments, 25-9. As established in the [OATF Process and Procedures document](#) agreed to between Faculty Senate Executive Leadership and the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs in October, the approved report and recommendations were forwarded to the University President and Provost for their consideration (see [Faculty Senate President letter to President and Provost](#), April 15, 2012, which includes a summary of the OATF's key recommendations and a synopsis of the Faculty Senate debate of the report).

3. *Shared Governance*. The final Leadership Initiative involved the initiation of a process to define what shared governance means at FGCU. Shared governance is a cornerstone of successful colleges and universities and has been recognized as central to FGCU's success since the University's founding (see FGCU [Founding Faculty Senate Philosophy Statement](#)). At the same time, as the University has grown rapidly, various and sometimes competing visions of what shared governance means have proliferated. Earlier this year, leaders from the faculty, administration, staff, and student government met at the invitation of the Faculty Senate Executive Leadership and committed ourselves to working cooperatively to define what shared governance means and how to know when we're getting it right. As President Bradshaw noted at the first meeting of the campus leaders on this issue, FGCU can no longer go without clearly and jointly reaching greater clarity on this key issue.

The [process originally imagined by the Senate Executive Leadership](#) assumed a broad

basis of common vision and values among the various stakeholders that would lead to the timely adoption of a joint statement modeled after [a template](#) developed by the [Advisory Council of Faculty Senates](#) of the State University System of Florida. After more engagement with the faculty, most notably at a [December faculty forum](#) devoted to the issue (forum summary is located [here](#)), and in conversation with representatives from other stakeholding groups, there was clearly a level of interest and investment in the issue that warranted extending and deepening the conversation.

As a result, an eleven-member workgroup formed in Spring 2012 consisting of the following:

Douglas Harrison, Faculty Senate  
Howard Smith, Faculty Senate  
Halcyon St. Hill, Faculty Senate  
Ronald Toll, Administration  
Kathleen Miller, Administration  
Andrew Cinoman, Administration  
Neela Chevli, Staff Advisory Council  
Billy Blood, Staff Advisory Council  
Kathleen Crawford, Staff Advisory Council  
Jasmine Villanueva, Student Government  
Justin Carter, Student Government

Records of the group's work are collected [here](#). The workgroup agreed to move toward adoption this academic year of a common definition and set of general principles that describe shared governance, with a longer-term goal of developing a more detailed description of how to implement and measure the effectiveness of shared governance processes in the coming year.

In general, the leadership-initiative model, which descends from the [Senate Strategic Directives developed in 2007-2010](#), provided a useful framework for focusing Senate Leadership efforts. Faculty responding to a survey of Senate effectiveness gave the Initiatives model high marks overall (4.29 on a 5.0 scale; see Appendix 2). Possible areas of focus for 2012-13 Leadership Initiatives are discussed in more detail below.

### **Other Initiatives**

The Faculty Senate also responded to University and state-wide issues as they emerged.

- In response to calls from national and state politicians for sweeping changes to higher education, the Faculty Senate formed the Ad Hoc Committee on Higher Education Reform. This group of faculty leaders was charged with developing a statement for the Faculty to adopt as an official stance on legislative efforts to restructure the curriculum and goals of higher education in Florida. The resulting document, titled [“Nine Flawed Assumptions of Higher Education Reform,”](#) was unanimously adopted by the Faculty Senate in January and shared on and off campus with interested parties.
- In matters of university governance, the Faculty Senate debated concerns raised by faculty regarding the conversion of academic office space in Ben Hill Griffin

Hall to administrative support usages. Faculty were particularly concerned not just about how this space will be used in the future but how the decision was made to reassign this space. These faculty perspectives and concerns are captured in a [Resolution on Space Utilization](#) that the Faculty Senate adopted in February. President Bradshaw [responded in a memo](#) to the Faculty Senate President dated February 16, 2012.

- Also with respect to governance, the Faculty Senate [approved a bylaws change](#) that institutionalizes a process for communicating the voice of the Faculty's deliberative governance body to the FGCU Board of Trustees, thereby assuring that the Board has the most current knowledge available between the regularly scheduled meetings of the Board to inform their role as public stewards of the University's mission.
- The above revision to the Bylaws was part of a bundle of [bylaws revisions](#) that the Faculty Senate approved in its ongoing efforts to ensure the Faculty Governance System remains responsive to the evolving needs and processes of the University. Update Bylaws are located [here](#).

### **Accountability initiatives**

*Senate Team Work Plans and Reporting:* This year, Faculty Senate used a reworked process for taking and organizing Senate minutes (the new template is used in all approved minutes available [here](#); previous models for taking minutes available [here](#)). The new streamlined format freed up the availability of the Faculty Senate Administrative Assistant to use her time more effectively for Senate administration and, by moving away from a transcript-model, reduced the amount of time required to vet drafts.

Similarly, the Faculty Senate Executive Leadership also introduced a revised workflow management and reporting process in the Senate Leadership Team. This workflow system is built around the reporting form used in Appendix 1. This system provides a greater level of detail, accountability, and consistency across all teams, while eliminating the cumbersome need for each team facilitator to write a year-end prose report (an approach that was only ever unevenly successful in the best of years), since the final column in the work flow tracking form gives a clear indication of what was accomplished and what is to be carried forward. The reporting process emphasizes the tracking, as opposed to monitoring, of work. All reports were updated monthly before each SLT meeting and collected on an Angel site for all SLT members.

In general, these changes to work flow and work management have been well-received by faculty involved (4.85 out 5.0 in the Faculty Senate Effectiveness Survey; see Appendix 2). Suggestions for improvement include the introduction of greater transparency on the Angel site and the need for more specificity and accountability in the goals described in the individual teams' work plans.

*Senate Service Documentation Letters:* This year, the Faculty Senate Executive Leadership provided letters from the Senate President documenting the service of each Senator, Senate Alternate, Team and Committee Facilitator, and members of Senate Teams and Committees, an effort that has been periodically in use over the years. Over

150 letters were distributed. The workplan model described above made this process more efficient and manageable.

In general, faculty indicated support for this effort (4.65 out of 5.0). At the same time, there will always be a certain margin of discontent and frustration in such undertakings. In the first place, respondents to the Faculty Senate Effectiveness Survey expressed a desire for letters to arrive earlier in the semester. Moreover, survey results also indicated the particular challenge that exists in this effort to balance the importance of documenting and recognizing Faculty Senate service against the risk of misallocating credit where it is either more or less deserved. The Faculty Senate Leadership Team [discussed this dynamic](#), and the consensus opinion was that the best way to measure the quality of elected representation is at the ballot box. Following this discussion, the Faculty Senate Executive Leadership determined that the primary emphasis of these service letters should be on the documentation of service, rather than evaluation of the quality of that service. This decision militated against efforts by Senate Leadership to parse and weigh variant levels of service quality or faculty involvement on a given team or committee, or on the Senate as a whole.

*Elections and Appointments Processes:* This year, the Faculty Senate Leadership Team focused on providing more regularized and intentional support to the colleges and units in their elections of Senate representation at all levels. An ad hoc committee on Election Guidance compiled a sample ballot for all Faculty Senate Teams and Committees, coordinated with Faculty Leadership in each college to determine the number and type of representatives needed for Senate, created a modified schedule of team election cycles in light of the implementation of the Positioning and Alignment Task Force results, and helped ensure that all units completed elections by the end of this academic year for next year's representatives, as mandated by Senate Bylaws.

The Appointments Team also worked to nominate or appoint faculty to as many non-Senate University-wide committees as possible before the close of the academic year and used an online system that included a standard template of information about each committee so that faculty would be better informed about the best fit between their interests and abilities and the available opportunities for service at the University level beyond Senate.

*Senate Effectiveness Survey:* The Faculty Senate Executive Leadership this year introduced the use of an online survey to gauge the effectiveness of the Senate Governance System. The origin of the survey emerged from Leadership's belief that if Faculty Senate was going to claim the right and responsibility to provide evaluative feedback on the performance of our partners in the governance of the University, Faculty Leadership should submit themselves to faculty scrutiny and peer feedback as well. The survey was targeted at Senators, Senate Alternates, the Senate Leadership Team, and members of Senate Teams and Committees. The questions and summary results appear in Appendix 2. The survey indicates broad satisfaction with the effectiveness of Faculty Senate, with several suggestions for improvements that have been discussed throughout this report.



## **Professional Development**

Finally, this year, Faculty Senate co-sponsored both the annual Promotion Workshop and an Academic Portfolio Workshop with the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. The Promotion workshop was well attended, featuring a panel of faculty from a range of ranks and included extended time for faculty to hear from and engage Academic Affairs administrators on promotion standards and criteria. The Spring 2012 Academic Portfolio Workshop is the first fully in-house version of the program originally offered by Peter Seldin and J. Elizabeth Miller at FGCU for the past several years. A cohort of FGCU faculty mentors facilitate the workshop with colleagues, who receive intensive instruction in the creation of a comprehensive academic portfolio documenting progress and accomplishment in teaching, research, and service.

## **AY 2012-13**

At its last meeting of the year, the Faculty Senate returned the 2011-12 slate officers to the Executive Leadership positions. Officers reelected are:

Douglas Harrison (CAS), President  
Howard Smith (CPS/CAS), Vice President  
Madelyn Isaacs (COE), Secretary  
Arie Van Duijn (CPHSW), Parliamentarian

This group will consider the results of the Faculty Senate Effectiveness Survey, the progress made toward this year's Leadership Initiatives, and the status of goals from Senate Teams in order to formulate Leadership Initiatives for 2012-13. These initiatives will be a topic of discussion at the first Senate meetings of the Fall 2012 semester.

## **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1: 2011-12 FGCU Faculty Senate Team Work Plans

Appendix 2: 2011-12 FGCU Faculty Senate Effectiveness Survey and Summary Results

Appendix 3: University PBC-Faculty Governance Diagram

Appendix 4: Faculty Feedback on Space Utilization