



MISSISSIPPI VALLEY STATE
UNIVERSITY.

Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes

Date: Tuesday, 3/12/2024

Time: 11:00am

Venue: Virtual/Zoom Meeting

Attendees: Dr. Candace Carter-Stevens, Dr. Julius Ikenga, Dr. Shelly Garlotte, Dr. Mary Shepherd, Ms. Jocelyn Haley, Dr. Christine Campbell, Ms. LaTonzia Evans, Dr. Daniel Splaingard

AGENDA ITEM #1: OPENING

CALL TO ORDER and REMARKS; REVIEW OF MINUTES/APPROVAL; REVIEW AGENDA ITEMS/APPROVAL

The online/Zoom meeting was called to order at 11:01am.

Carter-Stevens requested that everyone review the minutes at the beginning of the meeting, but a motion was made to table approval of last meeting's minutes until the next Faculty Senate meeting. (Motion: Garlotte; Second: Ikenga)

Carter-Stevens asked if there were any questions or comments about the Agenda items. None were suggested so a motion was made to accept the Agenda as is. (Motion: Campbell; Second: Haley)

AGENDA ITEM #2: OLD BUSINESS

A. FACULTY SENATE OFFICERS

Faculty Senate officer appointments for 2024-2025 were announced, based on the discussions and decisions from the 2/20/2024 meeting. Current officers are as follows:

President – Dr. Candace Carter-Stevens
Vice President – Ms. LaTonzia Evans
Secretary – Dr. Shelly Garlotte
Assistant Secretary – Dr. Mary Shepherd
Parliamentarian – Dr. Christine Campbell

It was further stated that, unless someone resigns, these Senators would serve in these roles for a total of two (2) terms, serving through the 2025-2026 academic year.

B. FACULTY SENATE CONSTITUTION and BYLAWS REVISIONS

Carter-Stevens stated that the Bylaws and Constitution need to be updated, as some items are no longer applicable. She asked for suggestions regarding the revision process. Campbell and Carter-Stevens suggested sharing the responsibility by dividing the document among the Senators so each could revise a page. (Voluntary division of the document by Page Number: 1-Campbell, 2-Garlotte, 3-Ikenga, 4-Haley,

OFFICE OF THE FACULTY SENATE

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5,6-Evans, 7-Shepherd, 8-Splaingard, 9-12-Carter-Stevens) These preliminary revisions should be completed by the next Faculty Senate meeting on April 2, 2024.

Carter-Stevens has a goal of Fall 2024 for completion of revisions.

There was a question about whether the Faculty Senate Constitution and Bylaws revisions will need the approval of the Full Faculty. One option presented by Carter-Stevens was for Senators to present the document to their own individual department for approval. Ikenga suggests this would be an efficient method to consider. Campbell added that after getting approval within our departments, all faculty could then be informed at the Full Faculty meeting of the approval and instructed to be aware of the changes and adjustments.

For consistency of revisions, the Faculty Senate Constitution and Bylaws document was emailed to Senators on 3/12/2024 during the meeting by Campbell.

C. FACULTY HANDBOOK REVISIONS

Carter-Stevens noted that the Handbook has been in a state of review for some time and has been submitted to faculty for review several times. She suggested that we begin in the Fall (2024) examining the revisions that have already been made and determine whether they are sufficient to present to the Full Faculty at our Spring 2025 Full Faculty meeting for approval. All Senators present agreed with this goal date. Within her response to a question from Campbell about the procedure for Handbook revisions, Carter-Stevens added that, since the revisions that were made during the tenure of Dr. Chetara Epps, no additional suggestions or revisions have been received from faculty members.

D. TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURE

Faculty experienced another internet outage yesterday, 3/11/2024. Personal hotspots needed to be used, and loss of internet affected instruction. Carter-Stevens stated she mentioned the inconvenience to the Vice President. She added that she has still not received information about access to the Faculty Senate web page, despite emails and direct conversations with an individual in the IT Department. CC'ing email correspondence was mentioned, as well as finding additional assistance for the potentially busy IT Department.

AGENDA ITEM #3: NEW BUSINESS

A. DATE FOR 2024 SPRING FULL FACULTY MEETING

Carter-Stevens requested suggestions for dates for the Full Faculty meeting. She added that the Vice President for Academic Affairs could not attend the first Thursday of April. Garlotte stated that she would only be available on 4/11 and 4/25. Senior Exams may be a conflict for 4/25, and 4/11 is Founders' Day Convocation. 4/25 was determined to be a better choice, with the time of the Full Faculty meeting to be set for 11:00AM.

B. FACULTY CONCERNS

Ikenga inquired about the communication to Department Chairs regarding Faculty Senate representation. Carter-Stevens confirmed that she had emailed all Chairs and CC'd Academic Affairs. It was eventually suggested to CC Academic Affairs on everything.

Academic holidays and breaks for this academic year have been problematic, especially for faculty with children in school. MVSU Spring Break did not align with the break of Faculty's school-aged children, necessitating childcare this week while children are out of school on break, and preventing family vacation. Additionally, Christmas break was perceived as too short. It was suggested that academic breaks should align with Greenwood-Leflore district's school breaks as a default. Carter-Stevens plans to speak with Academic Affairs about this.

**(Zoom Meeting automatically ended at 11:31AM, requiring a second login to continue meeting.)*

(Academic holidays/breaks, cont.) Carter-Stevens added that alterations to the Academic Calendar have been made in the past, such as combining separate "Fall Break" and "Thanksgiving" into a single week's break, discontinuing "Reading Days," etc. These alterations were intended to ensure availability of the correct amount of class time for students.

Splaingard expressed concern about the pre-loaded assignments in Canvas, specifically a discussion board that appears to generate AI "chat" responses to student answers. He states that he did not personally respond to the students' answers and is concerned that he could be misrepresented. Garlotte suggested that the pre-loaded assignments could still be available but unpublished initially so instructors have the choice to utilize. Carter-Stevens plans to speak with Academic Affairs about this.

Ikenga inquired about a copy of the Constitution and Bylaws. Campbell emailed a copy to Faculty Senate during the meeting.

Ikenga inquired about the IHL response to the Parental Leave request. Carter-Stevens confirmed receipt and summarized that the IHL decision from Dr. Rankins has communicated a denial of adding Parental Leave and explains that parental leave falls under FMLA (Family Medical Leave Act) and/or university accrued (medical or personal) leave. Carter-Stevens also commented on Dr. Rankin's response to competitive faculty salaries inquiry, saying that it was very brief and did not offer a timeline or plan.

Ikenga also inquired about a recent MS Senate bill calling for the closure of three MS universities. He suggests we not be complacent. Carter-Stevens added that the bill quickly died but that the situation will continue to be monitored.

AGENDA ITEM #4: ANNOUNCEMENTS

No announcements were put forward.

AGENDA ITEM #5: ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:44am.

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Senators should review the minutes from the 2/20/2024 meeting for discussion and/or approval at next Faculty Senate meeting on 4/2/2024.
2. Determine whether revisions to the Faculty Senate Constitution and Bylaws require presentation to the Full Faculty for approval.

3. Faculty Senators should review the Constitution and Bylaws and suggest potential revisions – deadline next meeting on 4/2/2024. (Refer to Agenda Item #2; Section B, for page assignments.)
4. Carter-Stevens will continue to pursue access to the Faculty Senate web page for editing.
5. Carter-Stevens will speak with Academic Affairs about aligning future academic calendar holidays and breaks with those of the local public school district.
6. Carter-Stevens will speak with Academic Affairs about pre-loaded Canvas assignments.
7. Carter-Stevens will email Parental Leave response and Faculty Salary response from IHL to Faculty Senate members.