

# Fall 2021 CLAS Faculty Assembly Minutes

15 November 2021

Online via Zoom

Submitted by Dr. Suzanne Robbins, Secretary to the CLAS Faculty Assembly

## 1 CALL TO ORDER & CHAIR'S WELCOME:

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Dr. Selman Hershfield, Chair of the Faculty Assembly, called the meeting to order at 3:01, introduced himself and welcomed everyone to the Fall Assembly.

## 2 APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE SPRING 2021 ASSEMBLY

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Selman Hershfield made a motion to approve minutes, with Ben Smith seconding. The minutes were approved with 48 ayes and 14 abstentions.

## 3 INTRODUCTION OF NEW CLAS ASSOCIATE DEAN FOR DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

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Dr. Evans-Donaldson introduced herself and discussed her role, which is to make all feel welcome.

## 4 UPDATES FROM COMMITTEES

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- Faculty Council - Ben Smith noted some of the areas the Faculty Council is addressing this fall, including the following:
  - Academic freedom; conflict of interest policy; noted the Faculty Senate ad hoc Committee on Academic Freedom is a fact-finding committee and soliciting concerns from faculty.
  - Posthumous promotion for faculty
  - Mentoring pre-tenure faculty
  - Noted that the Faculty Senate will vote on modifying titles for non-tenure track faculty and have a no confidence vote of the administration's pandemic policy management
- Finance Committee - John Palmer
  - Noted that changes in income sources (no longer collecting on line distance learning fees), have strained the OPS budget. The committee is currently examining unit OPS requests and working on recommendations to the College.
- Nominating Committee - Andrea Caloiaro

- Noted that the large number of seats to be filled, noting that the committee would like to have at least two nominees for each seat and that nominations should be diverse.

## 5 INTRODUCTION OF NEW FACULTY

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Nine new faculty introduced themselves to the Assembly.

## 6 CLAS FACULTY COUNCIL RESOLUTION

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Ben Smith welcomed new faculty. He then introduced the Faculty Council Resolution on Academic Freedom and opened the floor to modifications and discussion.

The committee worked together to improve the substantive content as well as wording. Notably, the Assembly added verbiage to broaden the scope of the resolution to include protection for academic decisions, including curricula, from outside interference, especially political interference.

The committee also discussed the lack of CLAS representation on President Fuch's Task Force and called for an outside investigation, supporting parallel efforts from UFF and the Faculty Senate.

Tiffany Jensen called for the vote; Pamela Gilbert seconded. The motion passed: 51 in favor, 1 no, and 5 abstain.

## 7 ADDRESS TO THE FACULTY, DR. DAVID RICHARDSON, DEAN OF THE COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

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Dean Richardson gave a warm welcome to the faculty, especially the new faculty. He spoke in support of shared governance, citing the work completed by the Assembly on the motion. He reiterated his support for academic freedom.

The subject of his address was the recent conflict of interest denial of 3 CLAS faculty members that made national news. He followed with a broader discussion of academic freedom and outside influence.

The first part of his address regarded the decision-making process at the University of Florida, the sequence of events in the denial and subsequent reversal and his role. He noted that due to ongoing litigation and the recording of the Assembly meeting that he would at times be circumspect.

He shared with the faculty a graphic of the decision-making apparatus of the University, noting that the Deans were not part of it. He also shared a graphic on the COI process. After discussing his role, and that he reversed the decision for Dr. Dan Smith on November 3 (prior to the President's reversal), he noted he was pleased with the outcome. He strongly noted that he was working with the best interests of the college in his decision to deny Dr. Smith the outside work, using the recommendation/language of the general counsel. He was not given the opportunity to discuss the decision of the general counsel with it. Finally, he noted that he requested a CLAS member on Task Force and Fuchs declined that request.

He concluded reiterating his support for academic freedom as a core value that must be protected and well as his support for a liberal arts education.

Opened to Q &A

## 8 NEW BUSINESS

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No new business

Selman Hershfield adjourned the Assembly at 4:45.