

Faculty Senate Meeting Agenda

10/3/23, 2:00–3:15 pm, Teams

Agenda

1. Call to order; Approval of Agenda (2 min) – Tirza Leader/Kathy Pinzon
2. Executive Session (0 min)
3. Reminder of Committee Tasks (3 min) – Tirza Leader
 - a. Shared governance – Executive
 - b. Summer Funding – Budget
 - c. Service Release – G&E and CoCo
 - d. Office Hours, Outside Employment (e.g., eCore), Classroom Caps – G&E
 - e. Chair and assistant chair duties – Professional Concerns (reorganization subcommittee)
4. Discussion and vote on mediation amendment to resolution on vote of no confidence (10 min) – Paul Grant
5. Discussion and vote on no confidence resolution (20 min) – Tirza Leader/Amanda Wilsker
6. Adjourn

Meeting Minutes

Present: Adrienne Cottrell-Yongye, Ajay Mallia, Amanda Wilsker, AmyH Erickson, Andrew Cardona, Atul Saxena, Beth Cavalier, Carlos Ruiz, Dmitry Shisikin, Fengjie Sun, Greg Gullette, Heather Morton, Ian Krouse, Indhira de la Rosa, Jessica Estep, Jill Penn, Jim Nolan, John Marinan, Joshua Beall, Joye Cauthen, Juliet D’Souza, Kamal Kakish, Karen McCarron, Kat Deeley, Kathy Pinzon, Lis Javazon, Lissa Pollacia, Maggie Schmidt, Marni Brown, Pam Anderson, Paul Camp, Paul Grant, Richard Pennington, Rong Liu, Sherita Moses, Sherly Abraham, Stephanie Wright, Susan Quinn, Tirza Leader, Wei Liu, Whitney Holley, Ying Guo

1. Call to order; Approval of Agenda (2 min) – Tirza Leader/Kathy Pinzon
 - Motion -Beth
 - Second – Marni
 - Yes – 31
 - No – 0
 - Abstain – 2

Ajay – can we consider electronic voting without having an additional meeting
Tirza- bylaws do not address – has precedence as has been done in the past – for less serious resolutions or bylaw changes
Kamal – communication from provost (forwarded email from Chancellor’s officer) was out of line
2. Executive Session (0 min)

3. Reminder of Committee Tasks (3 min) – Tirza Leader
 - a. Shared governance – Executive
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4. Discussion and vote on mediation amendment to resolution on vote of no confidence (10 min) – Paul Grant

Tirza – reached out to chancellor’s office 10 days ago – can they help/timeframe/etc – response yesterday at 2pm saying it’s up to the president –

Beth – AJC article – no comment – was Tirza allowed to comment? – she was not given instruction or permission to comment

Beth – like the idea/optics of the amendment – demonstrates we are trying for NC not to happen – concerned of logistics

Sherita – in light of media exposure found it embarrassing as a faculty member for that to be in AJC – in respect to resolution he supports the president - Tirza – not negated, doesn’t get president fired – just a statement of how the faculty feel – what happens after is up to president and BOR – also embarrassed about AJC – was leaked by someone

Atul – chancellor’s email – he has heard one side of the story – would it be possible for him to hear our point of view? – not trying to evict anyone of their position – Tirza- reached out to chancellor after first poll and resolution was coming forward with timeline, etc – offered materials/videos/minutes – no information requested – Atul – could we try one more time – Tirza – no reason for that if resolution doesn’t pass – if it does they might reach out

Evelyn – would like to hear presidential town hall recording – Tirza – still not sent out – we give access of our information to any faculty/staff/student who asks

Whitney – intent and tone of amendment particular following town hall – number of constituents saying we are speaking different languages – more respond positively to resolution with amendment asking for mediation – good faith, while lots of talking very little communication – Tirza – also received similar feedback

Karen – don’t understand how we decide whether we move forward with resolution? – are there mechanisms to decide if there has been progress? – Tirza – if amendment and resolution pass then we try to bring in a mediator – shared gov resolution as starting point of where we want to go – summary presented of what happened – what was agreed to - shared with faculty and then at that point the faculty will be presented with a vote of no confidence – senate will be done with resolution after today

Paul Grant - we should begin by thanking Monga and Chancellor for acknowledging our concerns – disappointment they will not participate – put forward in good faith – shows

that we are sincere about addressing the issues – willing not to rush to a vote and have asked outside folks to come in and assist – doesn't see a downside on this

Lissa- what are consequence after a vote of no confidence?

Beth – logistics we may need to sort out – don't think we can keep it hanging over head of cabinet or paralyze senate – we need to move forward one way or another – position has been not in favor until recently – going on for 6 months – disheartened to see that every communication we get about feels worse – no acknowledgment that they have done anything – everything blamed on faculty or union

Paul – agrees with Beth – we are talking past one another – blaming everything except saying they have made mistakes

Keith – like Beth originally inclined to vote against - but tenor has changed – if we pass the resolution with the amendment can we position it as a vote of confidence/no confidence – this would put a deadline – propose we put a date – have the opportunity to talk with us and make us confidence

Kamal – we do need to move on – line of communication with or without and willingness to work together is open – the vote won't make that option go away – yes we need to consider the risks – in favor of sit down and talk – but if no responses then we have to understand no answer is an answer – let's move on with vote and if its no confidence then we can deal with that after – if this isn't handled

Motion – Whitney

Second - Jill

Yes – 31

No – 9

Abstain – 3

5. Discussion and vote on no confidence resolution (20 min) – Tirza Leader/Amanda Wilsker

Liz – as a faculty senator we represent all faculty – have received many requests that we vote to allow all faculty to vote

Tirza – anonymous form has also had comments that they have confidence and don't need a vote

Beth – do we have to determine the numbers if it goes to full faculty – Tirza – assuming resolution passes and we have a full-faculty vote there is value in just publishing the results – present data as it is – value in presenting data as is to president/chancellor/BOR/AJC – speaks for everyone including minority voice

Keith - propose amendment that we stipulate a day for the vote

Yes – 32

No – 7

Abstain – 3

Wei – against proposing a fixed date – should be exactly 6 weeks from today- will create inconsistency

Motion to approve the resolution - Liz

Second – Pam

Yes – 33

No – 9

Abstain – 2

6. Adjourn

motion – Liz

second – Amy H

Yes – 34

No – 0

Abstain – 1

Resolution for Vote of No Confidence

WHEREAS, an increasing number of GGC faculty are concerned with: (1) the GGC President, Provost and Chief of Staff's ability to effectively manage resources, programs, and services sufficient to accomplish and sustain the GGC mission (Financial Management); (2) the GGC President and Chief of Staff's ability to manage a balanced governance structure designed to promote institutional integrity, autonomy and flexibility of operation (Leadership); (3) the GGC President and Provost's ability to recruit and retain well-qualified faculty sufficiently to carry out the mission of the institution and ensure the quality and integrity of GGC's academic programs (Personnel Management). All of which is seen to be caused by a lack of understanding and failure to support of GGC's mission and vision;

WHEREAS a straw poll was conducted in May 2023, and with a response rate of over 50%, more than 80% of respondents supported a no-confidence vote if there was no significant improvement over the summer;

WHEREAS the follow-up poll conducted in August 2023, with a response rate greater than 65% (with 272 out of 409 eligible full-time faculty voting) indicated that 56.7% (232) of faculty support the senate's continuation of the process of a no-confidence vote as they do not feel enough change was demonstrated over the summer;

WHEREAS, the issues outlined below are a direct reflection of a president who, while being physically present on the job, has been largely absent from leadership responsibilities and disengaged from faculty and by administrators whose multiple leadership positions may be a conflict of interest that have led to siloed systems and a breakdown in effective communication which are demonstrated by:

- Difficulty in getting many cabinet members to engage in and commit to shared governance, with a lack of understanding by the cabinet that mono-directional quarterly meetings will not rectify this situation especially at the cost of requested monthly meetings with the president and bi-monthly meetings with the provost.

- Persistent reluctance of certain cabinet members and administrators to meet with representatives of the faculty and openly discuss the factors of most concern to faculty.
- Communication issues that remain unaddressed, including failure to share documentation that should be publicly available (or available to the external community through FOIA) in a timely manner.

WHEREAS, expectations and hopes for improvement over the summer were not met, despite Senate leadership's efforts, leading to a large number of faculty concerns remaining – including but not limited to:

- Perpetual faculty and staff shortages resulting from a failure of the budget to properly prioritize that which is in the best interest of students, thus contributing to GGC's graduation rate continuing to be a USG low of 18% for six-year within system graduation. For more information: <https://www.ggc.edu/about-ggc/institutional-research-and-analytics/institutional-effectiveness/student-success-profile>ⁱ
- Elimination of institutional effectiveness without properly providing alternatives to support the college community's need to access the institutional data required to make the necessary changes to improve GGC's graduation and retention rate.
- A faculty compensation structure created with limited faculty input and implemented before faculty had a chance to review and question the methodology and data. Faculty concerns include long term consequences such as pay that will continue to fall at or below the 25th percentile for most GGC faculty, reduced incentive to serve our campus at exceptional levels, questionable peer selections with regards to cost of living differences, and negative repercussions for our ability to hire and retain excellent facultyⁱⁱ.
- Poor planning for increasing enrollment, including a poorly executed plan to bring over graduate students from neighboring institutions to teach GGC courses, made at the administrative level and not by chairs who are supposed to oversee scheduling. Led to
 - Late decisions to allow overloads, which had been previously banned, to GGC faculty.
 - Lack of available sections, and course capacities that are regularly exceeded without warning or input from facultyⁱⁱⁱ.
 - Faculty covering unstaffed sections for adjuncts when the hiring process is not complete. Students will have no interaction with their actual faculty member until after add/drop has ended. Not all sections may be fully covered for all class meetings, and for faculty picking up the slack for such courses, there is no additional compensation.
- Persistent use of a single person from the Executive/Administrative staff to fill multiple roles which either causes a conflict of interest, such as the Vice President for Human Resources also serving as the Chief of Staff and holding a Cabinet position, or puts someone who lacks requisite qualifications and has other important demands on his time, such as appointing the Associate Provost for Academic Programs to also serve as Interim Dean of the GGC School of Education, when they are not credentialed in that school and is leading our SACSCOC process on top of their other AP duties.
- A misinterpretation of SACSCOC guidelines regarding faculty qualifications and a failure to defend faculty flagged by SACS who are certainly qualified to teach courses in their respective disciplines.

- Insufficient planning, development of necessary supporting procedures/policies, and/or notification to faculty throughout major structural changes, including:
 - Restructuring of the disciplines to departments.
 - Restructuring of offices to better reflect new departmental structure
 - Changes to the approval process for faculty to earn additional income through opportunities such as eCore, and failure to provide BOR policy dictating the change.
- The implementation of a summer compensation plan that incentivizes teaching asynchronous and lower level courses while allowing the schools to profit off of instruction. This occurs despite GGC's subsidy from the state including credit for summer enrollment^{iv}.

WHEREAS, faculty are increasingly concerned by the allocation of the \$18 million in year-end funds for FY23 and question the funding priorities of this administration, specifically noting the following issues:

- Decisions made with limited faculty input despite the administration's knowledge as early as Fall 2022 that significant funds were available.
- Faculty voices often silenced in the college-wide budget committee meetings, with faculty being told to direct questions to the Provost privately. No allowance for discussion or debate in what is supposed to be a committee meeting.
- Funding priorities focused on debt elimination and pre-payment of non-essential items while at the same time the college discontinued or reduced support for faculty to pursue training and research^v. Such decisions undermine faculties' ability to offer high quality, engaging, and transparent online courses for our students.
- Drastic cuts to summer compensation and additional faculty assignments previously available over the summer were announced late in the spring semester, a time when the Cabinet was well aware of remaining funds (including more than \$6 million in a hiring lag fund.)^{vi}

WHEREAS the majority of the Georgia Gwinnett College faculty have significantly different perceptions of the state of Georgia Gwinnett College compared to the administration. Evidence for these differences can be found in faculty climate surveys and No Confidence vote polls versus comments by Pres. Joseph in recent Faculty Senate and town hall meetings, as well as the letter sent to faculty on 9/28/23.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE FACULTY SENATE that the faculty of Georgia Gwinnett College seeks to work successfully with the administration to avoid a faculty vote of No Confidence against the administration by enlisting the assistance of the University System of Georgia office or a mutually agreed upon designated mediator to facilitate mediation between the GGC Faculty and its Senate and the administration for a period of no more than six weeks, after which time qualified faculty (as defined as BOR regulations 3.2.1.1 and 3.2.1.2) may vote to support or oppose a No Confidence vote.

ⁱ Evidence and consequences of such failures include increased course capacities, over ten percent of full-time faculty departing the institution over the last two years, failure to provide sufficient lines to fill vacancies, and insufficient salary offers such that many searches are unsuccessful.

ⁱⁱ While current pay may exceed the 25th percentile, as the plan was presented, the distribution will shift over time, slowly increasing the 25th percentile salary. Faculty will see no market adjustments until their salary falls below the 25th percentile, at which point they might only expect increases to bring them to this level contingent on available funding. Other than full professors (and lecturers ineligible for promotion) with 7 years in rank at GGC who might end up at the median of their group (again contingent upon funding), remaining faculty with more than 3 years at GGC can expect salaries in the long run to persistently hover around the 25th percentile.

Inclusion of schools in communities with significantly lower costs of living from Gwinnett/Atlanta also creates unreasonable minimums and 25th percentile marks. Expectations that we can fill new lines offering the minimum from this distribution – from communities where the median home price is less than half the median price in Lawrenceville – is reducing the number of qualified faculty interested in pursuing a career at GGC. While the Senate is thankful for the amazing new hires we did secure, we are also aware of numerous unfilled positions whereby multiple candidates declined offers due to the offered salary.

ⁱⁱⁱ For example, course caps in first-year English courses have risen from 20 students up to 25 students in fall 2023, effectively creating an additional course to teach with no additional compensation, and decreasing the likelihood of student success in these first-year courses and at GGC. Smaller writing classes increase retention at the college level (Blatchford et al., 2002; Horning, 2007), and the English professional organization CCCC recommends classes of no more than 20 students, or a total of 60 students per instructor. Poor administrative planning or administrative disregard for student success continues to inflate class sizes at GGC.

Similarly, in Math support courses capacities are being determined by the number we can legally fit into a classroom rather than what is in the best interest of students. Even with the increased capacities, there were insufficient seats available, and many non-STEM students were advised over the summer to delay taking their Math course due to the lack of availability.

^{iv} Changes in summer pay fail to fund summer supplemental faculty assignments including work vital for student success, program assessment and accreditation thus significantly reducing faculty involvement in these processes, which are expected to be faculty-driven. There is discussion of revising the compensation plan for next summer, but concerns remain over the unwillingness of the administration to subsidize faculty summer appointments beyond the revenues generated from tuition.

^v For example, there is no budget for Quality Matters (QM) Certifications and there has been no search to fill a critical position in the Center for Teaching Excellence, vacated this Spring.

^{vi} The new compensation plan paid faculty a per-unit amount based on course enrollment, creating incentives for lower level and asynchronous courses. While many faculty may have benefited financially from this summer's pay structure, that was largely the result of a last minute decision to offer a 3% base and an unexpected increase of 14% in summer enrollment. Faculty were notified of the 3% base pay

added to their compensation in mid-May, shortly after the first straw poll and well after some faculty made the decision not to teach or cancel classes with insufficient enrollment. Changing the pay structure days before summer school began was viewed as inappropriate and still left faculty with questions surrounding service and student engagement (mentoring) during the summer months.