



Faculty Senate  
Meeting No. 1, Fall Semester 2023  
(Plenary Session)  
15 Sep 2023, 2:00 PM  
Room A402

### **1. Call to order and roll call**

Prof Omondi called to order the meeting shortly after 2:00pm.

The following were present: profs Houghton, Lenz, Cabuay, Han, Hsieh, Zhoulai Fu, Jiwoong Lee, Jeong, Herold, Tran, and prof chairman Omondi. Provost Hefazi was also present. (Dean Pak joined midway through the meeting. Zhoulai Fu replaced Jihoon Ryoo for the first portion of this meeting, through all the committee chair votes. In place of Sangjin Hong, Jiwoong Lee hereby and henceforth will attend as ECE department representative. Prof Han stayed for an initial portion but had to leave early due to a pre-existing commitment.)

### **2. Acceptance of agenda**

Approved by all.

### **3. Remarks by Chair**

Chairperson Omondi welcomed everybody, and stated that we are required to operate according to Robert's Rules of Order. He stated that the rulebook is extensive, at about 1200 pages, but that as a small body we do not have to strictly adhere to all of it. He distributed a part of the book that summarizes the small-body exceptions.

He went on to address the importance of our Senate at the University, and also the value of service especially re: service and/or the betterment of the university.

Provost Hefazi followed up with some comments regarding the value of serving on the Senate, esp. as regards tenure and promotion.

#### 4. Establishment of at-large Executive Committee members

Chair Omondi indicated that he did not receive any emails regarding nominations for Committee Chairs.

Two Executive Committee members must be voted in. Prof Lenz inquired regarding the role of the Executive Committee, and Prof Omondi read the description of the Executive Committee responsibilities from the by-laws. Prof Lenz self-nominated herself to serve on the Executive Committee. Prof Herold self-nominated himself to serve on the Executive Committee. Prof Omondi nominated Prof Han. The candidates stepped out of the room while the other Senators voted.

Senators could place votes for up to 2 of the nominees.

Seven Senators voted: Prof Han received 5 votes, Prof Lenz received 4 votes, Prof Herold received 3 votes. Therefore, Profs Han and Lenz will serve on the Executive Committee for the 2023-2024 academic year.

#### 5. Assignment of Senators to committees, and establishment of committee chairs

As a result of in-meeting nominations and votes, the committees were formed and finalized as follows ('C' denotes Chair):

##### **Academic Personnel**

Rosa Jeong  
Joe Cabuay  
Ky Tran (C)  
Jihoon Ryoo

##### **Academic Planning**

Jihoon Ryoo (C)  
Oliver Herold  
Chihmao Hsieh  
Ji-Woong Lee

##### **Education Council**

Joe Cabuay (C)  
Oliver Herold  
Ky Tran  
Ji-woong Lee

##### **Executive Committee**

Amos Omondi (C)  
Chris Houghton  
Chihmao Hsieh  
Changwoon Han  
Mackenzie Lenz

##### **Campus Environment**

Chris Houghton  
Rosa Jeong  
Mackenzie Lenz (C)  
Changwoon Han

#### 6. Plan of action for this semester

Prof Omondi opened by indicating that there needs to be some attention paid to the situation with the Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching. He also indicated that more progress needs to

be made on passing the SIDA that was proposed last year. These are both leftover issues from last year.

Prof Omondi stated that we need to do more to encourage faculty participation. The issues tackled by the Senate should not only be issues considered important by the Senate, but also include those considered important by the general faculty.

Provost Hefazi mentioned that there are some developments underway at the Admin side and he wanted to give the Senate a heads-up that these will be announced in the upcoming year.

### **7. Roundtable announcements by Senators regarding issues that they would wish to cover this year**

Prof Omondi polled the general faculty (two professors) in attendance of this particular Senate meeting, regarding what issues they would like the Senate to cover this upcoming semester, and there was no response.

Prof Lenz mentioned that the faculty in her department are concerned about the annoyance and health concerns posed by smokers on campus. She indicated interest in finding a solution. She also wished to address the 'Chuseok Optional Teaching Day'; her department's faculty members say that it's not fair to put the burden of (managing this scheduling) choice on faculty members.

Prof Houghton indicated that one solution to the Chuseok problem is to include the previous Friday as a reading day. He concurred with Prof Lenz that the smokers are an annoyance, as he teaches in B205 and the smokers disrupt his teaching.

Provost Hefazi indicated that the Senate has the authority to call officials to come and report.

Dean Pak indicated that there was no other easy option for the Chuseok Optional Teaching Day. The Admin overall looked into the possibility of Commencement on Saturday, but it was not feasible. Overall, it is up to professors to decide how they want to handle the Chuseok Optional Teaching Day.

Provost Hefazi indicated that, due to accreditation, in general, there are required hours of classroom instruction. This time, it is up to instructors. Generally, due to the rarity of this year's situation, how individual faculty would address this scheduling is not an uber-serious concern for the government.

(At this moment, Prof Jihoon Ryoo came back to take his own place in the Senate.)

Prof Omondi suggested that the individual committees gather and start their planning for the year.

Prof Omondi stated that the Senate recommendation, made in June, regarding the university's Research website had been accepted by the president, and he had recently enquired about its implementation, so that he could inform the senate. He was informed that the website had been "renewed" in mid-August and was given a plan for future work. These raised considerable doubts as to whether the Research Support Office is serious about implementing the recommendation. For example, a major part of the "renewal" consisted of retagging the

few .pdf files that already existed on the site, renaming links, and introducing new tabs (with no corresponding content). He provided detailed feedback to the Research Support Office, but the response has done little to allay the doubts. He stated that he would be meeting with V.-P. Han the following week, to discuss the matter, and hoped to be able to report some progress at the next senate meeting.

In response, Provost Hefazi indicated that President Lee, after receiving the suggestion about this kind of Research Summary, assigned the revision of this website to Dean Johng-II Lee. And that perhaps the Senate should best hold discussions with him. Provost Hefazi also reiterated that the Senate has the authority to ask administrators to come and report what they have done.

Prof Omondi stated that he had communicated with V.-P. Han but not Dean Lee. Dean Pak mentioned that the Team Leader has recently changed in Dean Lee's office, and that the meeting with VP Han might include Dean Lee.

Dean Pak indicated that we should feel free to convey our points about the Research Summary website more strongly.

Prof Omondi confirmed that he would ask to meet with Dean Lee as well.

Prof Omondi indicated that committees should start meeting with some clear ideas; and then two weeks before the next Senate meeting, he (perhaps also including the Executive Committee) could meet with the committee chairs to discuss what will be tackled this upcoming semester.

Provost Hefazi said that various faculty have indicated to him that they are not familiar with 'what's going on' (on campus), and he strongly recommended that Senators talk to their faculty members (e.g. by including an agenda item for this during department meetings). Prof Omondi indicated that Senate meeting minutes are not only posted on the SUNY Korea website, but are also emailed to all faculty.

At this time, Prof Hsieh expressed that, regarding the Senate meeting minutes, in the past they have been comprehensively written down. He offered the suggestion that the meeting instead be audio-recorded, accompanied by a basic written summary of the meeting that includes plain-text 'time-stamps' matching the summary to the audio. This would make the job of the secretary much easier (and here, at this moment Prof Houghton voiced his agreement), and asked Senators whether there is any objection. Prof Omondi indicated that the Senate meeting minutes are not intended to serve/inform only the Senate, but rather also the faculty in general, and so their input could also be considered. Prof Herold indicated that he has no personal objection to an audio recording.

Prof Pak mentioned that he'd rather not have all his words recorded, but would rather wish to see the audio recording contents distilled down to brief synopses. Prof Hsieh mentioned that, unfortunately, there may be no way (for now) for the AI to distinguish between voices accurately, in order to summarize what each Senator says in a meaningful way. However, he indicated understanding what Prof Pak was saying.

Prof Cabuay suggested that perhaps there can be some disclaimer on meeting minutes, so that faculty wouldn't have to worry about being wrongfully incriminated while still being held accountable... He also mentioned that culture, mission, and vision should be aligned. Specifically, while we are being asked to be more vocal so that we can extract more insights, at the same time, we may not even understand our own deficiencies in our communication. He indicated interest in seeing a values statement that helps in promoting implementation, instead of an obsession with formal 'procedure'. He wished to see a balance between concern for teaching and research, else we cannot rightfully consider ourselves 'a university'; and he also wished to see the creation of a stakeholder engagement strategy/plan/implementation process.

Prof Houghton mentioned that SBU uploads their live streams onto Youtube, but there are only 12 subscribers total, so maybe that's not a very effective communication strategy.

#### **8. Agreement on dates for next meetings**

Prof Omondi indicated that the upcoming meetings for this semester will stick to the 2nd Friday of each month. Prof Houghton indicated that his final exam is during the proposed December meeting, and Prof Omondi made a note that we will need to re-determine that particular meeting date.

#### **9. Any other business**

Prof Omondi indicated that he would keep all the handwritten voting slips from this Senate meeting for one day, for any Senator's review, after which he would dispose of them.

#### **10. Adjournment**

Prof Chair Omondi adjourned at 3:18pm.