



# Faculty Senate

*Meeting No. 3, Fall Semester 2023*

*(Plenary Session)*

*10 Nov 2023, 2:00pm*

*Room A402*

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

Prof Omondi called to order the meeting at 2:03pm.

All faculty senators except Prof Tran (family obligation/emergency) were present. Provost Hefazi was also present. Dean Eugene Pak joined shortly after the start.

## **2. Acceptance of agenda**

Approved by all.

## **3. Acceptance of prior meeting's minutes**

Approved by all.

## **4. Committee reports**

### *a. Executive Committee*

Prof Omondi reported that the Executive Committee had met, discussing what feedback to give to some of the committees; and that the committees had apparently acted on that feedback, as reflected in the current committee reports.

Prof Omondi also reported that the Research Office has been working to be more effective for the faculty, namely that it organized a professional development 'session' covering grant preparation and another on startups. But progress on the Research News website has been slow. A meeting was held on Nov 8<sup>th</sup> between Prof Omondi, VP Han, and the Research

Office's team leader. Prof Omondi indicated to VP Han that he is always welcomed to come to Senate meetings to share the Research Office's progress. VP Han replied that he could have more news to share by the time of the next Senate meeting. Prof Omondi also reported that the Research Office team leader has indicated that she has a lot on her plate. Prof Omondi indicated to her that the Senate would like the Research website to reach an acceptable standard in a reasonable amount of time. While it takes time to manage and edit the website, Prof Omondi has offered to volunteer to help, but it is up to the Research office to take him up on his offer. He informed the Senate that it has the right to review actions by administrative departments and to make appropriate recommendations to the President, and at some point it may wish to consider exercising that right.

Prof Omondi acknowledged the Provost's attendance and welcomed him to speak. Provost Hefazi reiterated that the administration is engaging in developing a strategic plan (LEAP: Leadership Empowerment and Potential). Soon the Faculty Senate will receive an invitation to send representative(s) to the committee charged with developing that plan.

Prof Omondi inquired for any comments regarding the recently announced Student Performance Policy.

*b. Academic Personnel Policy*

Because Prof Tran (chair of APPC) was absent, Prof Cabuay started. The committee discussed adding/integrating FIT policy into the SUNY Korea Faculty Handbook, specifically addressing general qualifications of new hires. The committee members emphasized the importance of incorporating FIT Korea into the faculty handbook to reflect FIT Korea's perspective. There are actually significant differences in degree and experience requirements between FIT and SBU, and these should be addressed in a revision. For FD, the minimum degree requirement is a bachelor's degree, while for FBM, we prioritize Ph.D.s, with the minimum requirement being a master's degree. In terms of experience, FBM mandates 7 years of industry experience and over 5 years of teaching experience. To accommodate FIT's requirements, it may be beneficial to add an additional row below the adjunct professors' section. The committee would like to re-visit and discuss this point in future senate meetings in light of updating the Faculty Handbook in the future.

The committee also addressed the relevance of "Brand Promotion and Graduate Student Recruitment" for purposes of faculty annual reviews and promotion. This criterion might not be especially relevant to some departments, and since this is not explicit in job descriptions, much of this would be done on a voluntary basis. Some of the committee's members have actively participated in promoting SUNY Korea at high school events, and their contributions should be acknowledged. The committee will investigate how to handle that criterion in the Handbook.

Prof Jeong addressed a document that had been handed out at the beginning of the meeting. It is a summary of data from the Faculty Satisfaction Survey administered to FIT's Adjunct Faculty. FIT faculty are looking to formalize different levels of compensation reflecting their teaching/industry experience. (At the moment, senior professors and new professors are making the same, and the senior professors group have complaints about it.) FIT faculty also wish for clearer specifications of the qualifications in the hiring process. Pre-2020, the FIT Korea hiring process involved two interviews, one with SUNY Korea faculty and the other

with FIT NY faculty; and then also a demo lecture. However, since 2020, there is only one interview required; the senior professors group have complaints about the difference. (“Senior professor” here refers to those with over 5 years of teaching experience.)

Prof Jeong noted that if a part-time faculty member teaches 2 sections of the same course number, SUNY Korea deducts 1/3 of the full amount on the second section. She mentioned that some FIT Korea faculty understand that this is a policy that no Korean university has.

Furthermore, as Prof Jeong noted, especially for adjunct professors, compensation should be set according to time spent for in-class instruction. That is, some 3-credit classes require 4 hours of in-class instruction, in which case compensation should be set or adjusted according to hourly payment (similar to other Korean universities’ policy). At SUNY Korea, even if a 3-credit class requires 4 hours of in-class instruction, compensation for teaching that class is (unfairly) the same as those classes requiring 3 hours of in-class instruction.

(Provost Hefazi asked about the number of respondents in the FIT Faculty Satisfaction Survey and Prof Jeong responded ‘twelve’.)

Prof Omondi responded to Prof Jeong’s comments by saying that we cannot necessarily copy Korean universities’ policies because SUNY Korea is not a Korean university.

Provost Hefazi mentioned that there’s a tangible difference between teaching two sections of the same course, and two sections total of two different courses. Provost Hefazi pointed out here that the workload for adjunct faculty at FIT NY is calculated based on contact hours; for full-time faculty it is calculated by number of credits.

Provost Hefazi indicated that he wished to see any Senate recommendations regarding revisions to the Faculty Handbook. He indicated that the administration would certainly consider it in the next revision.

Prof Houghton indicated that the kind of proposed policy change addressed by the committee (re: Handbook p. 21) could also relate to the English Language Program, regarding terminal degrees. Whereas the Handbook generally refers to the terminal degree as the PhD, in the field of English Language, the terminal degree is generally considered to be the Master’s. Prof Houghton suggests that this part of the Handbook be broken down department-by-department.

Prof Omondi pointed out that the committee’s next step should be to make a specific proposal, proposing concrete changes (and the rationales) and submitting those to the Senate to discuss and vote on, after which the Senate would send the proposal to the President.

Prof Omondi indicated that there’s a broader issue when it comes to the Handbook’s absence of policy addressing adjunct professors. A variety of departments at SUNY Korea have adjuncts, so we may want to look at the concerns of adjuncts across the entire university.

The committee members also discussed conducting evaluations of the university President, Provost, Deans, and Department Chairs. Implementing such faculty evaluations could be beneficial for our university, as it would help the President, Provost, Deans, and Department Chairs become more aware of faculty concerns and needs.

Prof Lenz’s main concern regarding faculty evaluations of administrators has to do with transparency and/or confidentiality, and the potential consequences for faculty job security.

Also addressed was that few if any Korean or US universities have this kind of administration evaluation system in place.

Prof. Omondi asked if there were any questions or any other comments on the topic. There were none.

Prof Omondi indicated that this kind of effort from this committee would be an overreach, according to the bylaws, since the committee is only charged with addressing certain faculty affairs. In order to evaluate administrators, the committee's remit would have to be changed, or it would have to be carried out by some other committee. But it was not impossible, and there are ready examples that could be looked at.

Prof Omondi mentioned, as an example, that George Mason University does have an annual evaluation process of senior administrators (including those at GMU Korea), based on survey data from its faculty. As another example, at the SBU (NY) campus, the Administrative Review Committee of their Senate surveys faculty every five years to evaluate senior administrators, but excludes evaluation of those administrators who have been in post for less than one year.

Prof Houghton asked Prof Jeong for clarification regarding the FIT Faculty Satisfaction Survey; it was only sent out to adjunct professors.

Provost Hefazi indicated that he's aware that for several universities in the USA, the review cycle is not annual but rather only every 5 years.

### *c. Education Council*

Prof Cabuay addressed a Powerpoint document handed out at the start of the meeting. He went over the purpose and mission of the Center for Academic and Research Leadership (CARL), a physical administration office within SUNY Korea operated by qualified staff members. It would serve faculty members who desire to improve their research and teaching skills; and would not impose any mandatory requirements on faculty.

CARL's Office of Research Excellence (ORE) would oversee teaching, mentoring, coaching, and advising faculty members and research assistants on their research skills. While there is already an organization with this kind of responsibility at SUNY Korea, the ORE would serve to complement that organization's offerings.

CARL's Office of Teaching & Learning (OTL) would oversee teaching, coaching, mentoring and advising faculty members on how to teach, lecture, facilitate and mentor better, as well as how to draft syllabi and exams.

Prof Cabuay also described the reporting lines for ORE and OTL. He has developed similar offices at other universities, earlier in his career, and thus he listed some of the typical objections that he has heard before in the midst of attempting to develop those. Prof Cabuay wishes to conceptualize CARL as a forum (a place where everybody can discuss the issues without inhibition), an instrument (with its accumulative resources, to make an impact), and an agent (that can lead and roll out these initiatives). Prof Cabuay stressed the value of developing a dedicated physical space for the Center, a design of which has been mocked up by Prof Herold.

Prof Hsieh mentioned that some of the objectives of the proposed ORE and OTL can, in theory, be addressed via AI; after all, these days, already, people can upload entire documents to ChatGPT and get thoughtful feedback. Prof Cabuay responded that AI's usefulness could be studied by the Center and its forums.

Prof Lenz mentioned that this committee described a kind of Office of International Affairs in the last Senate meeting, but that it has apparently been dropped in this version of the Powerpoint document. Prof Cabuay responded that the committee had apparently been 'overly motivated' during the previous Senate session.

Prof Houghton mentioned his membership on this committee last year, when overly ambitious visions bogged down the development progress of a similar initiative. He inquired whether such an ambitious initiative proposed this year would again not be manageable. Prof Cabuay responded that there should be a 'lab' to test the operation of the Center's offerings.

Prof Lenz asked whether there was already some consideration about where this Center would be physically located. Prof Cabuay responded that the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor used to have a DTS exercise space, where there are 3 vacant office rooms, which could be used for the 'lab'.

Prof Omondi pointed out that there are two kinds of approaches to developing a center like CARL: a top-down approach and a bottom-up approach. The top-down approach starts with declaring needs for a full-blown Center. He stressed that the committee will need to spend more time than one hour a month in their meetings, if there will be anything accomplished in a reasonable time frame. A bottom-up approach would be to ask what our faculty need, and that those needs could be addressed *without* resorting to a new organizational structure like a Center.

Prof Cabuay responded that he agreed that this CARL proposal reflected a 'massive undertaking' within the university. He said that the committee has thus proposed a "legacy lab", whereby future Education Councils would expand upon and refine what past Education Councils have worked on to develop.

Prof Hsieh mentioned that he was very sympathetic to the objectives and purposes of the proposed ORE and OTL. He expressed that he looks at these initiatives in terms of the communication involved during their operation. The proposed OTL talks about helping faculty to properly draft syllabi. Some of that help could actually come in the form of simply aggregating all the syllabi in one place (e.g. a zip file), and sharing that with all interested faculty. Then, any given faculty member could freely and asynchronously go through other faculty syllabi, examine how others are designing their courses, and make adjustments to their own syllabi as they see fit (even possibly contacting those faculty informally with follow-up questions regarding their course design). Prof Cabuay responded that the effectiveness of this kind of policy would require a potentially prohibitive amount of discipline; and that instead, an institution could serve to streamline a 'polite' process by which people would voluntarily contribute to fulfilling the Center's objectives.

Prof Omondi indicated that some of the services described under the auspices of the proposed CARL might not actually benefit from cross-disciplinary interaction or a centralized hub. For example, professors who need help or advice with designing their syllabi will likely approach other faculty in their own departments, due to the specific nature of their field.

*d. Campus Environment and Faculty Welfare*

Prof Han referred to a handout shared at the start of the meeting. He mentioned that the CEFW committee had identified the Top 5 funeral associations, and that they had contacted two of them. They received one sample invoice (please see attachment).

Prof Han also identified five possible resorts for our consideration. He received a proposal from the Sonos resorts, for a corporate membership account (please see attachment).

He mentioned that results from their investigation of private health insurance companies could be revealed by our next Faculty Senate meeting.

Prof Ryoo asked whether the terms of the described funeral association fees were simply per funeral (as opposed, presumably, to requiring payment of some kind of upfront cost). Prof Han replied that fees would simply be per funeral.

Prof Lenz mentioned that she has emailed a variety of SUNY Korea people to determine who is in charge of smoking-related facilities on campus, but nobody has replied so she will send follow-up emails. (One objective is to identify and/or email the relevant SUNY Korea staff in order to be introduced to the relevant IGC facilities management staff.) Prof Houghton mentioned that there is no apparent enforcement of the smoking policy, as outlined in Dean Lasher's email.

SIDA funding is off the table for now, given the higher importance of some of the other committee initiatives.

Prof Lenz talked to Sangnoh Kim about the newest version of the International Faculty Guide, and it has now been formatted as a website, the URL of which is available in the committee's report. Mr Kim welcomes any new information that faculty believe should be added to it. Prof Lenz is the point person if any faculty have requests or information regarding what should go on that website. Prof Houghton notes that the URL looks shady and he wished to know whether a more 'official-looking' URL could be used instead. Prof Omondi suggested that the committee also take a look at the International Faculty Guide offered by Mason Korea, for additional ideas.

*e. Academic Planning and Education Services*

Prof Omondi started by asking the APES committee why it included international student recruitment, varsity letter jacket competition, and IGC cross-campus integration in its committee report. He indicated that these do not fall under the expressed remit of the APES committee, and that the committee should take another look at whether they are relevant for APES.

Prof Ryoo then explained the committee's recent survey data collection from full-time tenured/tenure-track faculty regarding their opinions about potential changes made to RA financial support. Currently, the salary cap for PhD students at SUNY Korea is 2.5m KRW per month. Also, if a professor pays their PhD student a salary equivalent to 60% of that figure, that student's tuition is fully waived. The new "Korean standard" adopted by many universities now caps salary at 3.0m KRW. The survey thus asked faculty whether SUNY

Korea should match that cap; and then also what percentage of that cap those faculty should have to pay their grad students in order to help those students get a 100% full tuition waiver. Out of 18 tenured/tenure-track faculty, 7 responded (3 from CS, 2 from DTS, 1 from MEC, 1 from BM). One voted to keep the numbers at 2.5m KRW and 60% (i.e. no change). Two voted for 3.0m KRW and 50%. Three voted for 3.0m KRW and 60%, and one voted for 2.5m KRW and 50%. 4/7 of those faculty are not currently supporting graduate students.

Prof Omondi indicated that while we don't necessarily need to always follow or copy the policies of Korean universities (since we are, after all, an American university), in this case, since we are competing with Korean universities for graduate student recruitment, we will need to offer a competitive financial package.

Dean Pak expressed gladness that survey data was collected about this. He indicated that SUNY Korea has a rare (if not unique) policy when it comes to granting a 100% waiver on PhD tuition, whereas Korean universities generally have no such explicitly stated offer. There should be extended discussion among the affected faculty, also together with the Office of Academic Affairs.

Dean Pak also mentioned that, given that the Faculty Senate is regularly sending out a variety of important formal surveys, perhaps the Senate should apply for its own email address (e.g. [faculty.senate@sunykorea](mailto:faculty.senate@sunykorea)) via a request to IT. This would reduce any confusion from our faculty regarding the nature of the (survey) requests.

Dean Pak asked about last year's Center of Excellence in Learning and Teaching; he mentioned that the Ministry of Education is coming next week for an annual visit (not an audit), and so he would like to perhaps share some news with them regarding our planning and preparation in launching CELT. Prof Omondi indicated that unfortunately, as reported by the respective committee at the prior meeting, CELT (in its previously proposed form) is no longer being considered.

Prof Omondi mentioned that besides recruiting graduate students successfully with more attractive financial packages, he'd like the APES committee to also consider looking at non-financial support for those graduate students. He pointed out that most non-financial support here at SUNY Korea from the Office of Student Affairs appears to be geared towards our undergrads, and that he'd like to see more attention paid to the satisfaction, welfare, and non-financial support of our graduate students. Dean Pak responded that the Office of Academic Affairs has been regularly meeting with the graduate students and then taking them out to lunches afterwards. Prof Omondi indicated that he wished that the Career Development Center would offer more programming for graduate students, as the programming that he has seen has basically exclusively been for undergrads.

## **5. Any other business**

Prof Lee referred back to the three items from the APES committee report that were skipped earlier in the meeting: international student recruitment, varsity letter jacket competition, and IGC cross-campus integration. These are matters of undergraduate recruitment, and he asked where and how these matters should be addressed, if not in the APES committee or Senate. Prof Omondi mentioned that a variety of issues raised during Senate may indeed not fit any of the committees' remits. In such a case, he suggested that the Senate create an ad hoc

committee to address those issues. Individual Senators or committees may propose such an ad hoc committee.

Prof Hsieh inquired about confirming the December Faculty Senate meeting date and time, given earlier indications that at least Prof Houghton would not easily be able to attend the whole meeting. Prof Omondi confirmed that we will stick with the original schedule, and asked Prof Houghton to send an alternate or replacement in case he cannot attend. Prof Houghton indicated that insofar that he cannot find a replacement, then he would still be able to attend the first 45-60 minutes of the meeting.

## **6. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned around 3:30pm.