College of Engineering and Computing

Faculty Council on Governance

Meeting on Monday, Feb 12, 2024

(ZOOM: from 3:00 to 4:30 pm)

Minutes

Committee members:

In Attendance: Walter Tang (CEE), Vladimir Pozdin (ECE), Mohammad Rahman (ECE), Anamika Prasad (BME), Hamid Shahrestani (BME), Pezhman Mardanpour (MME), Wallied Orabi (MDCM), Lufan Wang (MDCM), Bogdan Carbunar (KFSCIS), Janki Bhimani (KFSCIS), Bruk Berhane (SUCCEED)

Absent: Xia Jin (CEE), Stephen Secules (SUCCEED), Norman Munroe (MME)

Guests: Dean Ines Triay, Vice Dean Mark Weiss

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 PM by Dr. Walter Tang.

1. **Updates from the Dean's Office.**

   Interim Associate Dean, Dr. Mark Weiss, joined the meeting to investigate the topics that's being discussed by the faculty council to provide necessary support from the Dean's office. Most of the recent work from the Dean's office was focused on improved communication between the Tenure and Promotion Committee and the Dean's office. He also highlighted the challenges faced with the Panther 180 system and suggested potential improvements.

   Interim Dean Ines Triay Ines commented on the importance of AI education and the need for a task force to review computer courses within the college to ensure they are aligned with AI advancements. She emphasized the urgency of equipping engineers with AI skills to remain competitive in the job market and to avoid being replaced by graduates from other institutions that prioritize AI education. Additionally, Dr. Triay supported the idea of an industrial park

and innovation complex, agreeing that it could significantly impact the college's reputation and success.

Further discussions with council members include:

1. Changes to the bylaws or the functioning of the CEC committees to ensure continuity in committees.
2. Report issue of Panther 180 to the Provost as it is a university-wide problem affecting all faculty, not just in engineering. Council member suggested for a consistent CV format for easy extraction of information to support tenure and promotion applications.
3. Introducing AI and programming courses as a college requirement was discussed, and concerns have been raised as this could extend graduation times for students and that there might be resistance to removing existing courses. Council members proposed that each program should devise their own way to identify a specific computer-related course and incorporate programming languages like Python into their curriculum. The Faculty Council can initiate a policy on this matter and the Dean's office is open to further discussions and suggestions. It is suggested to involve Curriculum committee to the Council Meeting in the discussion.
4. The need to develop a Service API was discussed. The Service API can be used to compile institutional data into comprehensive indicators on a dashboard, allowing committee members to download and utilize this API to align with the college's vision, mission, performance indicators, and action items.

2. Approval of Last Faculty Meeting Minutes (January 22, 2024).

The meeting minutes were approved with no change.

3. Other items discussed at the meeting.

A. All the faculty council members to meet with the Interim Dean.

The Faculty Council members are required to meet with the Interim Dean once per academic year. The next meeting with the Interim Dean has been suggested to be held in person. Council members are encouraged to prepare questions for the Interim Dean in advance.

B. Evaluation of administrator set-up and results

The Faculty Council discussed the importance of setting up a system for evaluating administrators and a mechanism to review results and propose directions to change.

C. Major new business for council members to report to home department.

The Faculty Council emphasized the importance of communication between the Council and each department. It is suggested that every council representative to brief at their faculty meetings at their home department and bring new business to the Faculty Council's meeting.

D. Quality of faculty hiring: first or second tiers of universities

The Council discussed the need to hire top-tier faculty. Hiring from the third tier could jeopardize the university's goal of becoming a top 50 college nationally. Considering the housing crisis in Miami, the potential of partnering with local companies to build a dormitory complex was discussed to attract top-tier faculty candidates with affordable houses. Issues with the hiring process, specifically the lack of transparency and the delay in decision-making, was a concern for the search committee. The new law by State of Florida restricting hiring from seven countries (such as China) has caused serious impact on the university's ability to attract the best faculty and students.

E. Ph.D. candidates as teaching assistant to reduce teaching faculty.

The discussion revolved around the need for the College of Engineering to improve its teaching methods and adopt new technologies. Some member proposed to reduce the number of teaching professors and instead increase the use of doctoral students and adjunct professors for teaching roles. However, concerns were raised about this suggestion. It was pointed out that doctoral students' primary focus is on research, and they may not have sufficient time or skills for teaching. Additionally, while adjunct professors might bring extensive industry experience, they may not be familiar with teaching methodologies, which could impact the quality of education. The importance of education and effective teaching was emphasized, with a call for teaching faculty to develop new courses and update existing ones to include relevant and modern content, such as AI and Python programming.

4. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 PM.