**LSUS FACULTY SENATE**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING**

**May 15, 2025**

**11:00 A.M.**

**Virtual Meeting**

**I. CALL TO ORDER** 11:02 a.m. President Williams called the meeting to order.

**II. PRESENT:** Senator Cassandra Williams, Senator Felice Williams, Senator Zaidi, Senator Gifford, Senator Saleh, Senator Yeh, Senator Dunnavent, Senator Zhao, Senator Siska, Senator Shepherd, Senator Kim, Senator Widmeyer, Senator Mikaberidze, Senator Noor, Senator Si Chen, . **Absent:** Senator White. A quorum was present.

**III.** **COMMENTS:**  President Williams opened the floor for comments from non-senators who signed up to comment, under prescribed time limits. Per parliamentary procedure, only those present in the room may comment. No one signed up for comments.

President Williams asked for a roll to be taken and asked senators to introduce themselves.

**IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Senator Felice Williams moved to approve; Senator Saleh seconded. Motion approved.

**V. PRESIDENT’S REPORT:**

President Williams opened the meeting by encouraging faculty to attend the upcoming May graduation ceremonies. “Let’s make one more sacrifice for our students—show up for them one last time and help end the year on a strong note,” she urged. She also noted that, due to the combined meeting of the Faculty Council and Faculty Senate, the administrators’ reports would be presented during the Faculty Council session.

**V. ADMINISTRATORS’ REPORTS**

**[Reports were delivered at the Faculty Council meeting]**

**Chancellor:**

Dr. Robert Smith began his report with “some pretty, pretty positive notes.” Despite the system-wide hiring freeze, fourteen positions, as well as student and graduate assistantships, have been “thawed” and are now available for hire. He then addressed issues with the construction of the bridge to Pilot’s Point. The lowest bidder made an error and requested to withdraw its bid. The next closest bid came in $1.7 million above the amount allocated by the state for the project, requiring the university to request additional funding from the State Legislature. Fortunately, the legislature agreed to support the funding request. Dr. Smith expressed his deep appreciation for “our entire legislative delegation, both the House and Senate,” who have been “very, very supportive” of LSUS’s needs.

Dr. Smith also mentioned that the Hub Project, which had been included as a priority five item in the current year’s budget, was not included in the new budget. In fact, the Board of Regents did not include any LSU projects in the new budget. However, with the support of legislative allies, an amendment was introduced to restore the Hub project in Priority 5. Additionally, he noted that another amendment is expected in the Senate to provide approximately $750,000 in cash, which would enable the university to begin moving forward with the project. Other projects under consideration by the State Legislature include funding for the Center for Northwest Louisiana Regional Impact, which is part of the university’s strategic plan, as well as a proposal to renovate science labs, which are showing signs of age and need significant updates.

Dr. Smith congratulated the LSUS Baseball Team and coaching staff on their undefeated season (54-0), setting an all-time record for four-year colleges. He wished them the best of luck at the NAIA World Series. He then provided an update on the upcoming graduation ceremony, which will involve a record 1,745 students. He encouraged faculty members to attend the ceremonies in support of the graduates.

Dr. Smith concluded his remarks by thanking the faculty and staff for a “remarkable year” that saw LSUS “bucking the trends” and continuing to thrive.

**Provost:**

Dr. Helen Taylor echoed the Chancellor’s remarks regarding the upcoming graduation ceremonies, emphasizing the importance of faculty participation in celebrating this milestone with students.

She addressed the ongoing hiring freeze, noting that several positions had to be cancelled as a result.

Dr. Taylor also provided a brief update on the recent SACSCOC visit and reminded the Senate that the Board of Regents requires all institutions to submit three-year academic plans. LSUS has completed its plan and submitted it to the LSU System for review.

**VI. NEW BUSINESS:**

No new business.

**VII. CONTINUING BUSINESS:**

The Faculty Senate received a copy of the proposed tenure and promotion policy changes from the Policy and Personnel Committee. These recommendations addressed various aspects of the tenure and promotion process, including procedural steps, the impact of tenure clock extension agreements, and the conditions under which such extensions may be revoked. Senators engaged in a brief discussion of the proposed revisions.

The next item of business concerned the Faculty Research and Development Committee’s (FRDC) recommendations for improvements to both the FRDC grant categories and the overall grant application process. The proposed changes included:

1. Increasing the lower-level grant ceiling to $2,500. A second funding tier would cover requests ranging from $2,501 to a maximum of $5,000.
2. Modifying the review process so that grant applications are evaluated solely on individual merit, eliminating the practice of guaranteeing a minimum number of awards at each funding level.
3. Redistributing annual grant funds by allocating 60% to applications submitted during the fall grant cycle and 40% to those submitted in the spring.
4. Revising and clarifying grant categories as follows:
   * A) Research: Includes supplies, equipment, data collection, editing services, and wages for student workers involved in research.
   * B) Instructional/Professional Development: Covers certifications, faculty and professional development activities, teaching supplies, and non-conference travel related to the faculty member’s discipline.
   * C) Conference Travel: Supports attendance at research, instructional, or professional development conferences, including registration fees and travel expenses.

Separate application forms would be created for each grant category to streamline the process.

Following this discussion, the Senate reviewed the Policy on Policy Manual. This document provides key definitions, outlines institutional policy statements, and is intended to serve as a centralized collection of the university’s official written policies.

**VIII. OBSERVATIONS & CONCERNS:**

No observations or concerns.

**IX. ADJOURNMENT:** Senator Gifford moved to adjourn the Faculty Senate meeting. The motion was seconded and approved, and the meeting was adjourned at 11:23 a.m. The Faculty Council meeting convened immediately thereafter and continued until 12:08 p.m., at which point a motion to adjourn was made and approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Alexander Mikaberidze

Secretary