



**COUNCIL ON STAFF AFFAIRS**  
**Minutes of Tuesday March 20, 2018**

**1) Call to order**

**a)** Chair Tiffany Soma called the meeting to order at 9:06AM in the University Center, Cypress Room.

**2) Roll call:** All representatives must sign/initial the attendance roster to be counted as present.

**a)** Members present: Heidi Browning, Pepper Croft, Donnell Davis, Philip Foster, Angelica Gannon, Selenseia Holmes, Kirk Johnson, Michael Kitchens, Yvonne Landers, Paul Leavy, Maya Mapp\* (Sylandi Brown-Proxy), Brian Ring\*, Sterlin Sanders, Terence Sullivan, Tiffany Soma, Janet Wade, Chasity Wood, Shannon Zapf.

**b)** Guests were: Dr. Michael Black (Academic Affairs), Anthony Bryant (Parking), Dr. Richard Carvajal (President), Beverly Cribbs (FYP), Bruce Curl (HR), Lynn Darsey (Auxiliary), Jill Ferrell (Parking), Sheila Hall (IT), Brian Haugabrook (IT), Shanika Hezekiah (Fin Svces), Marci Marshall (COEHS), Traycee Martin (F&A), Nicole Mitchell (Fin Svces), Shannon McGee (Auxiliary), Rebecca Murphy (EOD).

**c)** The following members were absent: Bob DeLong\*, HR Representative\*, Julienne Jackson. Please **send a proxy if you cannot attend a meeting.**

**3) Communication with Administration**

**a)** Report from the President

**1)** Dr. Carvajal reported that the legislative is rolling along and generally we see good signs on the USG and the university being fully funded. In addition, the TRS system is being made whole with additional funding.

**2)** Dr. Carvajal reported that the House voted in support of \$4.4M in their budget for Powell Hall renovation (this is unusual to be fully funded from one house). It now goes to the Senate for a vote.

**3)** Dr. Carvajal reported that the leadership across the university is being stabilized. The Cabinet is fully staffed and now working on Dean and Associate Dean level positions.

**4)** The University Council has unanimously approved the new Strategic Plan after university-wide input.

**5)** The STEAM Center is growing and will have a full-time Director by Fall 2018 hopefully

**b)** Report from Mr. Bruce Curl, Interim HR Director.

**1)** Mr. Curl reported that the search for a permanent HR Director is moving to conclusion. There were six Skype interviews and two candidates will interview on campus next week (there were three but one withdrew).

**2)** Mr. Curl reported that the position of Employee Relations Coordinator has been filled by Ms. Michelle Jordan of the Graduate School.

**4) Special Order of the Day**

**a)** Blazer Books Award Ceremony was held. The following staff were given awards to assist them in their educational studies: Ms. Melinda Pettway, Ms. Haley Cheyney, and Ms. Carla Gervin. Congratulations to all the winners.

**b)** Shannon Zapf and members of the Auxiliary Services team reported on the proposed new parking model for the campus. After meeting with all the constituent groups, a survey will be sent to all campus community members for input and a final decision will be made on the new parking model. The hope is to have the model in place for fall 2018. (See Attachment D for additional information)

**5) Approval of Minutes**

- a) Yvonne Landers made a motion to approve the February 2018 minutes which was seconded by Sterlin Sanders. The report was approved unanimously.

**6) Treasurer's Report**

- a) Yvonne Landers gave the reports for the months of November and December 2017 and January and February 2018. Donnell Davis made a motion to approve all four reports which was seconded by Michael Kitchens. The reports were approved unanimously.

**7) Report from the Chair**

- a) Tiffany Soma announced that she is resigning her position with VSU effective on March 30, 2018 and will therefore also be resigning as COSA Chair. Donnell Davis, as Immediate Past Chair, will step up as Chair for the remainder of the year.
- b) Tiffany Soma reported that the Employee Appreciation event with Faculty Senate will take place on Monday, April 30, 2018 from 8-11am in the University Center, Cypress Room. The event is being sponsored by Faculty Senate, COSA, Campus Wellness and the President's Office. There will be food, giveaways, games and health activities for all attendees.

**8) Staff Attendance and Participation**

- a) Tiffany Soma reminded all COSA representatives to send in their committee reports to Terence Sullivan each month before the Executive Committee meeting so they can be discussed and added to that month's full meeting.

**9) COSA Committee Reports**

- a) Policy Committee – Sterlin Sanders reported that the committee met to discuss some Bylaws changes. The changes have been remanded back to the committee to discuss at their April meeting.
- b) Elections Committee – Sterlin Sanders reported that the following representative positions are open for the upcoming year
- 1) Open positions for FY 19 (includes reps rolling off and vacant positions)
    - (1) 3 Finance & Admin
    - (2) 1 President's Area
    - (3) 1 Academic Affairs
    - (4) 1 Student Success
    - (5) 1 Student Affairs
- c) Social Recognition & Professional Development Committee. Pepper Croft reported that the committee will hold monthly meetings to provide more direction for the committee's many activities.
- d) Budget & Finance/Fundraising Committee – Yvonne Landers reported that the committee is speaking with Sam's Barbecue about holding a BBQ fundraiser. Janet Wade is working with Sam's to set this up. The hope is that we can sell lunches for \$10/plate of which COSA will get \$4/plate.
- e) Habitat Build Ad Hoc Committee – Donnell Davis reported that the VSU build is on for every day of April (except Sunday and Monday). Faculty, staff and students can sign up for 2 hour shifts throughout the month. The build site is located at 1016 N Lee St in Valdosta.

**10) Faculty Senate Committees**

- 1) Academic Honors & Scholarship – Donnell Davis – No report
- b) Academic Scheduling and Procedures – Tiffany Soma – No report
- c) Athletics – Sterlin Sanders – No report
- d) Diversity & Equity – Terence Sullivan – No report
- e) Educational Policies – Kirk Johnson reported (See Attachment A)
- f) Environmental Issues – Phil Foster – No report
- g) Faculty Senate – Terence Sullivan – No report (See other FS report attachments)
- h) Faculty Scholarship – Angie Gannon – No report
- i) Institutional Planning – Selenseia Holmes/Yvonne Landers – No report
- j) Internationalization & Globalization – Terence Sullivan – No report

- k) Library Affairs – Matt McIntyre – No report
- l) Strategic Planning – Julienne Jackson – No report
- m) Student Affairs – Selenseia Holmes reported (See Attachment B)
- n) Technology – Sterlin Sanders reported that the committee met IT to prioritize IT projects.

**11) University Wide Committees**

- a) Budget Advisory Committee – Julienne Jackson – No report
- b) Campus Safety – Shannon Zapf – No report
- c) Campus Wellness – Heidi Browning – No report
- d) Dining Advisory – Shannon Zapf – No report.
- e) Parking Advisory – Donnell Davis – No report
- f) Parking Appeals – Heidi Browning/Pepper Croft/Donnell Davis/Phil Foster/Paul Leavy/Terence Sullivan – No report
- g) Retiree Association – Yvonne Landers reported that we have enough COSA volunteers for the upcoming Retiree Luncheon taking place on April 10, 2018. Yvonne Landers also reported that she has received 16 new orders for retiree bricks.

**12) Old Business**

- a) Dr. Carvajal reported in his report that the search for the Dean of Science & Math is moving well.

**13) New Business**

- a) Kirk Johnson had the COSA representatives in attendance (and any guests) sing his new Blazer Creed “Rap”. (See Attachment C for lyrics)

**14) Adjournment**

- a) Tiffany Soma adjourned the meeting at 10:16am.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Terence Sullivan, COSA Secretary

## Attachment A

Educational Policies Committee

Minutes

February 13, 2018

Kendrick Coleman (Chair)

Kelly F. Davidson (Chair-Elect)

Stanley Jones

James LaPlant

Nicole Alemanne

Prosper Tsikata

Lucia Lu

Dave Bruno

Kirk Johnson

David Kuhlmeier (VSU Faculty Athletic Representative)

Jennifer Grubbs (VSU Director of Student Athlete Development)

Other members could not meet because of conflicts

I. Committee Chair Kendrick Coleman called the meeting to order with an overview of the issues scheduled to be covered: Withdraw Policy Revisions Review and Attendance Policy Revisions Review

### II. Withdraw Policy Review

- A. Dr. Coleman began the review of the revised language for withdraw policies related to medical and hardship withdraws by explaining the intent of the revision process to increase clarity and fairness for faculty and students when dealing with these types of withdraws. He stated that this will ultimately be remanded to the Faculty Senate and possibly other committees before official changes in the University Catalog.
  
- B. Discussion: Dr. Dave Bruno requested clarification regarding the difference between WP (Withdraw Pass)/WF (Withdraw Fail) and a regular W on the part of faculty and students. It was clarified by Drs. Coleman, Jones, and Alemanne that this policy wording applies to students who are submitting a request for medical and/or hardship withdraw after midterm. The default grade would be a WP, however faculty members have the opportunity to contact the Registrar's office to change the grade to a WF if they feel it is warranted based on the student's performance in the class.

Dr. Tsikata noted that the purpose of the review of the language in the document has the main goal of making policy more consistent in terms of the default grade given for medical and/or hardship withdraw requests. Dr. LaPlant also mentioned that the committee granting medical and/or hardship withdraws has significant faculty representation across colleges and disciplines, thus there are many opportunities to share viewpoints regarding each request by students.

Dr. LaPlant also clarified the language as related to violations of academic dishonesty. In these cases, the default would be a WF. Dr. Coleman suggested that perhaps the last sentences at the bottom of the page (point 2) might be connected in order to emphasize the connection between pre-term withdraw due to academic dishonesty and the role of the faculty member to contact the Registrar's office to change the default W to a WF. Dr. LaPlant suggested the following wording revision for point 2: "In the case that a student withdraws online prior to midterm as a result of an academic dishonesty violation, the faculty member can contact the Registrar's office to change the regularly assigned W to a WF."

Drs. Lu and Bruno inquired as to any timelines and/or course fulfillment requirements associated with changes of WP or WF. Drs. Jones and LaPlant stated that there is not a time limit on submitting a grade change form and that students would have to retake the course if it is a requirement for their major. Dr. Jones emphasized that a WF would affect student grade point averages, tuition charges, attempted hours calculations, and other financial aid measures.

- C. Vote to move forward with recommended language adjustment to be included in proposal for Faculty Senate and other committees: 8 yea, 0 nay, 0 abstentions.

### III. Attendance Policy Review

- A. Dr. Coleman began the review of the revised language for absence policies as related to course standing by explaining the intent of the revision process to clarify the university policy for faculty and students.
- B. Discussion among the committee members focused on two factors:
  - 1. Inclusion of attendance policy in syllabi/faculty autonomy in determining absence policies. Dr. Lu stated her support and inquired as to whether the suggested language must be included in every syllabus. The committee discussed the positive aspect of including clearly-stated policy in the syllabus for reference by faculty and students throughout a course. Though some professors may decide how to administer the admissions policy, a clear statement of these procedures can help both parties.
  - 2. Proposed amendment of language related to university-sanctioned activities where students would be serving as representatives of the university, such as athletics and other curricular activities (ex. Debate, Arts exhibitions, presentations of student research, etc.).

Drs. Kuhlmeier and Grubbs submitted a document with proposed revisions regarding absences related to athletics and other university-sanctioned activities. Both discussed in detail the intent to clarify the phrase "reasonable opportunities" on page 2 of the original proposed document revision for both faculty and students in order to provide consistency across colleges and departments.

In addition, Drs. Kuhlmeier and Grubbs also highlighted that the proposed language would aid faculty and students in cases of “last minute” notifications of university-sanctioned absences. For example, if a student-athlete is moved to priority position given an unforeseen injury on the initial player list, or if a paper is accepted for a presentation just before a conference given an unpredicted space in the agenda. Both also emphasized that the proposed language can help to hold students accountable for completing work within in a certain number of days (7). In addition, they are required to discuss work plans with faculty members such that both faculty and students are able to plan for a constructive work plan.

Several members of the committee stated that, while they agree with the need for similar language that holds students accountable for work plans and consistently grants “excused” absences related to these activities, there may be some discussion among Faculty Senate representatives regarding possible infringement on their specific policies, thus it will be important to consider all viewpoints.

Dr. Coleman indicated that these suggestions will need to be reviewed by Academic Affairs as well as Faculty Senate and related committees. The committee should present all points of view: a need for clarity/consistency in statements paired with faculty determinations of attendance policies based on their courses.

Other discussion points raised by Drs. Bruno, Tsikata, and Alemanne related to how official university-sanctioned activities would be considered with this recommended wording. Dr. Tsikata acknowledged the benefits provided by the official documentation sent to faculty regarding student athlete absences at the beginning of each semester and how this is helpful for establishing consistent “excused absence” policies for athletes and other students participating in university-sanctioned activities. Drs. Alemanne and Grubbs noted that there should perhaps be some accommodating language included regarding how “short notices” are defined and handled.

Additionally, committee members discussed a possible rephrasing of the wording “sports-related absences.” Committee members discussed how these would be quantified. Some faculty members were concerned that this statement needs to be more specific as to what “sports-related activities” might mean. Both Dr. Grubbs and Dr. Kuhlmeier noted that the proposed language specified that these considerations would only be related to the applicable season. In addition, they stated that student athletes are not allowed to miss class sessions unless directly connected with match/competition schedules per NCAA regulations. However, both agreed that more specificity in the terminology would support both students and faculty and will resubmit a revised version of this statement.

Dr. LaPlant suggested that we recommend a change in wording such that absences verified by university personnel be recognized as “excused” absences. Dr. Grubbs suggested that the Committee recommend an addition to the first sentence of the proposed revisions to include the idea that student athletes (or others representing the university in the above-mentioned types of activities) should consider their academic endeavors above other extracurricular activities to seek a balance. The Committee also suggested that language be added to indicate that student athletes (or others involved in university-sanctioned activities) should be held accountable for completing activities before missing class if at all possible.

Vote to move forward with the recommended language adjustments to be included in proposal for Faculty Senate and other committees: 8 yea, 0 nay, 0 abstentions.

## Attachment B

Student Affairs Committee Meeting

2/27/18

Odum Library

1:00pm

- I. After approving minutes from the meeting held in early fall, we returned to a previous discussion on the Blazer Guardian App. The app needs to be advertised, and there needs to be campus wide involvement. Possible avenues to utilize:
  - Trish's list serv
  - The Spectator
  - Student events
  - Syllabi
  - The Happening
  - Posters w/QR codes
- II. How do we narrow our focus and mission as a committee? Without overstepping our bounds or overlapping other committees, we need to decide on a precise measurable mission since we were not charged with one that includes a clear directive; perhaps a problem finding and directing committee. Possibly roll out a survey that will help us figure out what issues students are having so we can take those to the proper VP or office, to figure out what can be done.
- III. We revisited the idea of a student score card. That will be sent to Faculty Senate for discussion.
- IV. Graduation is going back to its earlier format!

**Blazer Creed Rap**<sup>®</sup>

**Written by Kirk Johnson - 2017**

When I say Blazer you say creed – Blazer ( ) – Blazer – ( )

When I say Blazer you say creed – Blazer ( ) – Blazer – ( )

We're talking about integrity – (audience says), "I can do that"

We're talking about civility – (audience says), "I can do that"

We're talking about citizenship – (audience says), "I can do that"

When I say Blazer you say creed – Blazer ( ) – Blazer – ( )

When I say Blazer you say creed – Blazer ( ) – Blazer – ( )

(Rap)

When we talk about the Blazer

We talk about the Creed

Just like education

We've got to plant the seed

Big minds, Big minds

That's who you are

Some from Georgia

Others from afar

So, When I say Blazer you say creed – Blazer ( ) – Blazer – ( )

When I say Blazer you say creed – Blazer ( ) – Blazer – ( )

(Call to Action)

Blazer in your Blood

Proud enough to show it

Get up on your feet - let everybody know it (repeat 3 X)

When I say Blazer you say creed – Blazer ( ) – Blazer – ( )

When I say Blazer you say creed – Blazer ( ) – Blazer – ( )

We're talking about integrity – (audience says), "I can do that"

We're talking about civility – (audience says), "I can do that"

We're talking about citizenship – (audience says), "I can do that"

When I say Blazer you say creed – Blazer ( ) – Blazer – ( )

When I say Blazer you say creed – Blazer ( ) – Blazer – ( )

Blazer ( ) – Blazer – ( )

Blazer ( ) – Blazer – ( )

- END -