

Polk State College
Faculty Senate President's Report
September 9, 2013

Welcome back to another year for Polk State College. Over the summer, the administration has worked together with your Senate on issues crucial to the future of the College. The following report is an outline of those issues. Please feel free to contact me for further information in regard to any of them.

During the Spring Winter Haven Faculty Forum, JDA full time faculty expressed dissatisfaction over the lack of space for faculty offices at the Center. The administration identified several spaces in downtown Lake Wales for future expansion which would allow for increased office facilities, including space in nearby office buildings and the purchase or rental of the vacant lot immediately adjacent to the JDA center. As plans moved forward slowly on procuring those facilities, it became clear that a more immediate solution would be required if the faculty were to be accommodated before the opening of the fall semester. Temporary office space was located on the Winter Haven campus and the full time JDA faculty who had heretofore had no office space were given space on this campus while plans were drawn to reconfigure the Community Room at JDA to allow for 4 faculty offices. This was completed the week before classes went into session. The cubicles are structured so that they can be easily torn down and moved to a modular building should the lot become available to the College in the near future. Plans for two modular buildings on that site, the other to include a Student Center, have already been drawn.

Continuing Contracts and Faculty Evaluation – The State of Florida has determined that K-12 faculty will all be on annual contracts only. An attempt to do the same with college faculty was arrested. However, there has been a change to move the time it takes to be awarded a continuing contract move from 3 to 5 years to 5 to 7 years. This takes place this school year, so that faculty who have begun teaching for us on a permanent full time basis in August may earn a continuing contract in as few as 5 years (or, at the most, 7 years). Embedded in this was the instruction that each Board of Trustees determine a way to evaluate continuing contract faculty. We have been asked by the administration to assist in developing a plan for evaluation of full time continuing contract faculty, and we spent some time this summer giving consideration to the wording, which must be developed this term. Rule 3.05, which comes before the Senate today, gives a skeletal version of this, but the full development of the evaluation has a long way to go. As we discussed this, it also became apparent that we needed to work on some other things with relation to faculty evaluation. The forms for faculty evaluation and SPI do not work for on line faculty (Are students engaged? Does the faculty member begin and end class on time? Use the book effectively?...). Dean April Robinson attended a valuable workshop this summer on evaluating on line faculty. We will be establishing a subcommittee to work on these evaluation procedures, and will also try to include members of the distance ed committee in this group. Please let me know if you are interested in serving on this important committee.

Developmental Education – All of you have heard, of course, by now, that the State of Florida has determined that a student who has graduated from a Florida High School any time since 2007 or who is active military, is college ready, and does not need remediation. We cannot require them to take a placement test, although they may opt to take one (if, for example, they want to place in a higher than entry level math course). If they do opt to take one, and the test places them in a remedial course, they are not required to take it. This excludes private schools, home-schooled students, out of state students, and older students, so we must still have Developmental Education in place for those students. We have spent much of the summer trying to decide how we will deal with this situation, because the State also has required us to offer developmental education in shorter, abbreviated courses so that students get into college classes more quickly. We must submit the outline of our plan to the State by mid-October. The Deans, advisors, Developmental Education teachers, and Department Coordinators in English and Math have been actively working on this through the summer. Everyone must be aware and involved in this because you may suddenly find students in your college level courses who are unable to read a college textbook or to write a coherent paragraph, and you will need to work with them and to know what is being put into place to assist them. If you have ideas for how we can help these students soar in spite of the limitations being placed on them by the State, please speak with your dean, senator, or department coordinator.

Screening Committee Issues – Several issues relating to Screening Committees were brought up during the past year, and I met during the summer with Members of the HR staff, the Deans, Peter Elliott, Ken Ross, and Val Baker to iron out several of these. Although we are still finalizing our results, several issues have been addressed. In order to shorten the time it takes to go through the hiring process, we decided to stick closer to the current procedure regarding the size of the screening committees. One of the things that holds up the committees is finding a time when all members can meet. According to procedure 6068, for a faculty or pro-tech position, there should only be 5 to 8 members, while for a clerical position, that number is only 3 to 5. In the past, the Deans have tried to accommodate everyone who wanted to serve on a screening committee by including all volunteers. Agreeing that the committees often become very large, this will change to stick with the procedure, and the Deans will try to include a larger variety of faculty members by selecting their membership from among those volunteers who have not served on a committee recently. Also, according to the procedure, the hiring supervisor or his designee can chair the committee, so at a time when many faculty members are being hired, the Deans do not have to serve as the chairs. Currently, Dean Santiago has asked Kaye Betz and Paul Pletcher to cochair the screening committee for a new math faculty to be hired (hopefully) for the Spring semester.

Gen Ed – After the state decided to change the number of general education courses from 36 to 30, and then rescinded the law, we were still left with the decision as to what courses would constitute our general education requirements at Polk. We are now required by the State to accept any of the General Education courses on the State's list as meeting our requirements, but we do not have to offer all of those courses ourselves. The Gen Ed Committee is currently meeting to decide exactly which courses will be General

Education Requirements for Polk. They have been asked to return to their departments and consider which courses could be General Education courses from the State's list.

Fall enrollment – Hopefully, you have seen Peter Usinger's reports on our enrollment. Although we are not as far in the plus column as we initially thought due to some financial aid issues, we can take great pride in the fact that we are the only state college in the state who continues to see positive growth. Go Eagles!

Respectfully submitted,

Dodie Cowan
President