



FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY
FACULTY SENATE

MINUTES
FACULTY SENATE MEETING
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2024
3:05 P.M.

The following members attended the Senate meeting:

G. Adams, T. Adams, P. Aluffi, J. Ang, M. Augustyn, C. Ann Baade, A. Barbu, H. Bass, B. Birmingham, D. Bish, M. Bourassa, A. Boutin, J. Broome, D. Broxterman, M. Buchler, M. Bukoski, J. Calhoun, J. Chanton, E. Chicken, I. Chiorescu, E. Coggeshall, E. Coleman, L. DeBrunner, M. Duncan, N. Ennis, N. Everhart, J. Fiorito, V. Fleury, M. Goldmark, R. Goodman, T. Graban, J. Guan, W. Hanley, E. Hilinski, P. Hoeflich, R. Hughes, S. Johnson, K. Jones, K. Killian, M. Killian, E. Kim, P. Kumar, T. Ledermann, L. Lee, A. McKenna, Y. McLane, S. Metcalfe, S. Miller, J. Ohlin, G. Ostrander, C. Ownes, C. Parker-Flynn, E. Peters, N. Pifer, M. Porter, J. Proffitt, I. Quinn, Q. Rao, P. Renfro, T. Rhynard, N. Rogers, E. Ryan, Q. Sang, S. Sansom, C. Schmertmann, D. Smith, G. Stanwood, M. Swanbrow Becker, Y. Tang, M. Therrien, A. Thomas, R. Tomko, G. Tyson, K. Ueno, A. Volya, G. Wang, S. Wasman, M. Zhang.

The following members were absent. Alternates are listed in parenthesis:

D. Armstrong, S. Ballas (A. Fahim), E. Bangi, W. Berry, M. Bosworth, E. Brookshire Madden, E. Cecil (S. Hazard), A. Dewan, D. Eccles, M. Fuentes, K. Gallivan, G. Gerard, A. Gilzene, F.M. Gloth, A. Gunjan, A. Khurshid, K. Lee, A. Lemmon, W. Li, T. Liu, P. Maurette, J. McNulty, V. Mesev, C. Moore, K. Ogle, R. Roberts, T. Somasundaram (S. Pappas), J. Standley, O. Steinbock, S. Zane(K. Davidson), Y. Zhou.

I. Call to order

II. Approval of the minutes, November 29, 2023, meeting
The minutes were approved.

III. Approval of the minutes, January 17, 2024, meeting
The minutes were approved.

IV. Approval of the agenda, February 21, 2024, meeting
The agenda was approved with a minor change to new business.

V. Report of the Steering Committee – Roxanne Hughes

- The steering committee met and discussed multiple topics that they shared with the Faculty Senate at this meeting.
- First, Senate Bill 846 on foreign influence. This law requires Board of Trustees and Board of Governors approval for any hire of individuals who are from countries labelled “countries of concern.” This process could delay the hiring process four months or more.
 - BOG representatives were not aware of the variation across departments for applicants from the countries identified on the foreign influence bill. These applicants help departments build and maintain their strong international reputations.
 - FSU has an FAQ for this law and the President established a task force.

- Next, the updated BOG regulation 8.011 that outlines criteria and administrative processes for new academic program approval.
 - The proposed amendment restructures the regulation to clearly identify the steps in the process for new academic degree programs. The BOG struck out the initial proposal to change the course approval process.
 - The steering committee reached out to the faculty representative on the BOG, Amanda Phalin from the University of Florida, to see what influence she has as she prepares for the March 26th and 27th BOG meetings. These meetings will be held at the University of Florida and 8.011 will be voted on.
- Still waiting on guidance from FSU for the BOG Regulation 9.016 which defines prohibited expenditures related to DEI efforts.
- Roxanne Hughes concluded her report.
- Bridgett Birmingham opened the floor for questions. **No questions were posed.**

VI. Announcements of the President of the University

- Richard McCullough began with discussing the current legislative session. The biggest donor to the university is the state so it is important to work for the contributions from the state so the university can complete the construction of new buildings.
- Operational support is the recurring money that the university hopes to get from the state. The last two years the university has done very well in this context, the next year will likely not be as good, but they hope to get enough for everybody to get raises.
- Not many new policies happening due to the policy changes done last year which the university is still trying to work on.
- The university is trying to adjust the foreign influence bill.
- February 1st was FSU day at the capital which coincided with the Board of Trustees meeting. On that day they announced the Pediatric Rare Disease Institute which is aimed at improving diagnosis and treatment of pediatric rarer diseases. The university was given \$1,000,000 from the legislative floor.
- Representative Adam Anderson was the sponsor of the bill. The institute is in the College of Medicine and overseen by Dean Littles.
- Partnership with Seminole Tribe continues to grow. The President and the First Lady attended the Seminole Tribes Brighton Field Day where they celebrate Seminole tradition and cultures.
- Retreat held by Tina Osceola for the Seminole Tribe of Florida Tribal Historic Preservation Office and Museum.
- The university got a grant award from Trump Gulf Coast board of 98.4 million to do a launch in aerospace advanced manufacturing process project across Northwest Florida. This project is called INSPIRE. The term sheet for this grant was approved on February 5th.
- The FSU Health Initiative continues to make progress. Started clearing the land for the Academic Health Center and continue to talk with Tallahassee Memorial Healthcare about the structure of the university's partnership with them.
- Professor Emeritus Bob Brown who was the former president for seventeen years at Boston University visited the university and met with faculty to share wisdom and information.
- The Fulbright reception was upcoming. This reception celebrates past and present Fulbright scholars. FSU has been one of the nation's top producers of Fulbright awards. There are 9 Fulbright Award winners that are now studying and teaching in various locations around the world. 20 students have been named Fulbright Semifinalists and six faculty recipients this year.
- Festival of the Creative Arts presented by the Office of Research was upcoming.
- The university will hold a conference for Florida State University's first-generation students so they can learn about navigating college, applying to grad school, building network, and finding jobs.
- February 15th was decision day. There were 77,000 applications, an 8% increase on last year. Over 16,000 students were admitted. The academic profile of the newly admitted students is a 4.4 average GPA, 1390 average SAT score, and a 31 ACT.

- The President addressed the Foreign Influence Task force, encouraging everyone to visit the website and FAQ.
- The President concluded his report.
- Bridgett Birmingham opened the floor to questions.
 - **Kathryn Jones, Arts and Sciences** – expressed that it seems like the intent of the foreign influence bill is to block the activities of foreign organizations. But as it is written it seems to have unintended significant effects on individuals from foreign countries.
 - **President McCullough** – agrees and expressed that he would like to see this moved from the hands of the BOT and the BOG, it was difficult to get them to understand why the university would want to accept students from countries of concern- would rather keep the process within the university where there is academic expertise.
 - **Robin Goodman, Arts and Sciences** – brought up concern of post-tenure review and the recent decision stating that it was inappropriate for the university administration to implement post-tenure review without bargaining it first.
 - **President McCullough** – responded that he does not think that not bargaining with the university will do anything. At the point where the law is there is nothing the University can do unless the courts overturn it.
 - **Robin Goodman, Arts and Sciences** – is concerned that while the current administration is looking out for the faculty, future administrations may not be so faculty friendly.
 - **President McCullough** – agreed and asked for them to allow them to come up with solutions to allay those fears for the future.
 - **No more questions were posed.**

VII. **Reports of special committees**
No reports of special committees.

VIII. **Reports of standing committees**

a. **Graduate Policy Committee – Ulla Bunz, Chair**

1. **Proposed Academic Standards for Graduate Certificate Programs Policy (addendum 1)**

- Graduate Level Certification programs have been active for a while and the proposed changes have been happening, The GPC proposes these changes to be officially added.
- The proposal says that any graduate student pursuing a graduate-level certificate must achieve a cumulative grade point average of at least a 3.0 across all graduate courses applied toward the graduate certificate.
- **Gary Tyson, Arts and Sciences** – expressed his favor of this policy but is concerned about policies being implemented without being written down and approved by the Faculty Senate.
 - **Ulla Bunz** – responded that it is something that is not intentionally done and when something comes up that has been acted as if it is a policy, they immediately try to rectify it by making sure these regulations are written down.
- **No more questions posed. No further discussion was posed.**
- The proposal was put to a vote. **The policy passed.**

2. **Proposed Full-Time Graduate Enrollment Policy Change (addendum 2)**

- Ulla Bunz brought forth another proposal to change the definition of Full-Time enrollment for Graduate Students. This proposal would change the enrollment from 12 credits to 9.
- **Mark Riley, The Graduate School** – many thought that 9 credit hours was full-time, but this was only if they were an RA or a TA.
- This proposal is benefits veterans, athletes, and Latin American Caribbean scholarship students.

- This proposal changes the minimum number of hours a student is enrolled in, but the student can opt to take more credit hours. The “half-time” definition remains at 6 credit hours.
- The proposal would not change federal aid requirements.
- The floor was opened for questions.
- **Arash Fahim, Arts & Sciences** – asked if this proposal would change anything for international students.
 - Ulla Bunz – answered that this will not change anything for international students because international students must take 9 credit hours to meet international requirements. This proposal will put international and domestic students at the same level of requiring 9 credit hours.
- Ulla Bunz added that if this passes, the policy will come into effect for Fall 2024.
- No further questions posed. No further discussion posed.
- **The proposal was put to a vote. The policy passed.**

b. University Curriculum Committee – Victor DeBrunner, Chair

1. Proposed Zero Credit Hour Policy for Degree Programs (addendum 3)

- Victor DeBrunner began with noting this policy enables academic programs to include zero credit hour academic courses as part of the formal academic curriculum.
- There are not many zero credit hour classes, most of them require some activity or exam to be completed and a grade is recorded for their continuation in the program.
- No questions and no discussion were posed.
- **The motion is called to a vote. The policy passed.**

IX. Unfinished business

a. Proposed Bylaws Revision – Bridgett Birmingham, on behalf of the Steering Committee (addendum 4)

- Proposed a bylaws revision that includes changing verbiage to add clarity on Section D, Procedure, Item 4, with regards to the Parliamentarian.
- No questions are posed.
- No discussion on the proposal was had.
- **The proposal was put to a vote. The policy passed.**

X. New Business

a. Students for A Democratic Society, SDS, Resolution – Will Hanley, Arts and Sciences (addendum 5)

- Brought forward a resolution regarding the Students for Democratic Society and their recent suspension.
- Senator Hanley first gave the senate the information regarding their suspension. The Students for Democratic Society attended a Board of Trustees meeting on November 10, 2023, with intent to use the period for public comment for public comment. They were told that the public comment period had passed and that they could watch the meeting silently but had no time to comment.
- During a break in the meeting, the students began to shout and were promptly asked to leave. One student, who may or may not have been a part of the Students for Democratic Society did not leave when requested. The BOT meeting was disrupted for a couple of minutes and then continued.
- The decision letter to suspend the organization included these details.
- Will Hanley brought up the Board of Governors statement of free expression which makes it clear that free expression is a fundamental principle and any curbs on free expression require extraordinary warrants of justification.

- The resolution presented to the Faculty Senate asks for information on four different things regarding the student organization's suspension. It asks how the complaint was initiated, an assessment of the harm caused by the protest, an explanation of the apparent contravention of the BOG statement of free expression by this decision, and for the precedent used to arrive at this sanction, as well as a short-term remedy until the Faculty Senate has a chance to evaluate the situation and matters of free speech and academic freedom.
- Will Hanley expressed that while the Faculty Senate is not an appeals court for hearings like this one, they do have a responsibility to safeguard academic freedom.
- The floor was opened for discussion and questions about the resolution.
- Question was raised in the chat asking if the student group has acknowledged that their behavior was inappropriate and stated that they will not repeat such actions.
 - Will Hanley responded that he does not have an answer but from what he knows the student group does not accept the nature of the decision and suggest that they were compliant with what was asked of them.
- **Todd Adams, Arts and Sciences** – agreed with Hanley's explanation of the events on November 10. Explained that the biggest issue was the one student who would not leave until security escorted them out. Brought up an issue with the word evaluate in the resolution, does not think that there is any purpose in reinstating them while Faculty Senate looks at the case because they do not play an official role in student conduct.
- **Bridgett Birmingham, Faculty Senate President** – shared that she was at the BOT meeting when this event happened. Clarified that the disruptive student came in separate from the rest of the group and sat on the other side of the room. The other group of students, when approached by the police left without much interaction and continued protests outside of the building.
- **Kathryn Jones, Arts and Sciences** – added that from the video the behavior of the students did not seem menacing or threatening. Agreed with Senator Adams on the taking issue with the word evaluate, but agreed the sanction seems aggressive.
- **Joseph Calhoun, Social Sciences and Public Policy** – questioned whether this is within the jurisdiction of the Faculty Senate.
 - **Will Hanley** – responded that these are questions he shares and notes that the BOG asked them to formally articulate the Faculty Senate's role in protecting free speech. This is an issue of principle in ensuring that there is a climate of free expression on campus.
- **Erin Ryan, Law** – relayed that this is within the Faculty Senate's jurisdiction because the Faculty Senate may formulate its opinion on any subject of interest to the university and adopt resolutions there on, resolutions treating those areas of authority legally reserved to the President of the university and the BOG will be advisory. Echoed the concern of Senator Hanley that this issue concerns free speech and academic freedom which should be a part of a primary area of concern for the Faculty Senate.
- **Todd Adams, Arts and Sciences** – agreed that he does not want FSU to become a place that suppresses freedom of expression. Notes that from the other side the sanction is not on the speech but the disruptive actions.
- **Marty Swanbrow Becker, Education** – brought up that he believed the students had an ability to appeal the citation and wondered if anyone knew whether that was done or not.
 - **Bridgett Birmingham** – could not answer and no one from Student Affairs was present to clarify.
- **Erin Ryan, Law** – responded to Todd Adams on his point about exactly what is being spoken about. Agreed that the sanction was for conduct but reiterates that the concern was the proportionality of the response. Recommended adding a portion to the resolution clarifying that it is a neutral resolution not in support of one view or another but erring on the side of encouraging free discourse.
- **Gary Tyson, Arts and Sciences** – raised an issue with not knowing enough about the situation to discuss whether the sanction was proportional. He questioned whether the student group planned on being disruptive at every meeting. If they did not state their intent to not repeat these actions, then the suspension is actually appropriate.

- Hanley apologized for only having secondhand knowledge of the event and cannot confirm whether they appealed or not. Added that he has read in the press an ongoing frustration of comment times being changed and the group's inability to leave public comments because of that.
- Tyson clarified that he would support a resolution if it was about the Board of Trustees not changing public comment times, but he does not agree with a resolution that supports disruptive acts because they are not included in free expression.
- Hanley brought up the BOG statement on free speech that only curbs freedom of expression in the eyes of unlawful conduct which heckling does not fall under in this case.
- **Tarez Graban, Arts and Sciences** – believed that there will be continued disagreement over what is appropriate and inappropriate behavior but does not believe this resolution is hung up on that issue. Stated that the best way to move with this resolution is to state the contradiction between the resolution about freedom of expression and this particular event.
- **Ulla Bunz, Visitor** – clarified that the conclusion drawn in the decision letter connects the disruptive student to the organization because they had previously been seen at some meetings of the organization and because the organization posted on social media saying that they were going. She also wants to make sure the disruptive student is really part of the SDS organization.
- The floor was opened for further discussion. No further discussion was had.
- The resolution was voted on. **The resolution passed.**

No further new business.

XI. **Special orders**

No special orders.

XII. **University welfare**

a. **COACHE Survey – Janet Kistner, Vice President for Faculty Development and Advancement**

- Encouraged participation in the COACHE survey.
- The COACHE survey is an opportunity for faculty to express their views on all aspects of their work life.
- Invitations have already gone out for this, if you have not received it, please let her office know.
- No questions posed.

b. **Faculty Union – Matthew Lata, United Faculty of Florida**

- Matthew Lata opened with mentioning they are still concerned about certain Senate Bill 266 restricting certain topics and theories in education.
- Still concerned about Senate Bill 746, that was the one that dealt with other unions throughout the state.
- They share the concern about discrimination of people from other countries and trying to continue to explain how this will make it difficult for recruitment.
- The union achieved the percentage to stay certified and the data has been submitted to the state office and to PERC. He believes the union has done everything they need and should be recertified. But still waiting to hear the official word from the PERC.
- **Kathryn Jones, Arts & Sciences** – asked if it is recommended to watch how the PERC rules on the Miami-Dade process, could we learn from it? DO you think it would be different since it is not college levels.
 - Matthew Lata answered it could be helpful because the bills do not apply to only Universities.
- **Tarez Graban, Arts & Sciences** – asked if we will have to do this process again next year.
 - Matthew Lata responded that yes, we will need to do it annually. He noted we will have to work hard to recruit our 60% each year.

President Bridgett Birmingham clarified some things with the voting process and what it means to abstain from a vote.

- **Marcia Porter, Music** – wanted to know confirm that abstaining doesn't mean no vote, because people can abstain for a number of reasons, but there is no way to clarify why you abstained in this process.
 - Bridgett Birmingham confirmed that abstentions do have several reasons, and she just wanted senators to know that their votes are noted in the record and that an abstention is considered a non-vote.

XIII. Announcements of deans and other administrative officers

The Senate meeting was adjourned at 4:51 pm.

**NEXT FACULTY SENATE MEETING
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 20, 2024, 3:05PM**

Bridgett Birmingham 4/4/2024 | 10:54 AM EDT
Faculty Senate President Florida State University

Graduate Policy Committee

Request the following Graduate Bulletin edits to provide additional clarification

(All changes are reflected in red)

Graduate Level Certificate Programs

(Graduate Bulletin- Graduate Degree and Certificate Requirements Section- Page 102)

[...]

The university offers a variety of certificate programs, which consist of an organized curriculum of courses that lead to specific educational or occupational goals. A list of all of the certificate programs offered by the university is available in the Academic Degree and Certificate Programs chapter of this Graduate Bulletin. **In accordance with the Academic Standards Policy in the Graduate Bulletin, all graduate students pursuing a graduate-level certificate must achieve a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0 (“B”) or better across all graduate courses applied toward the graduate certificate (5000-level or above) in order for the graduate certificate to be awarded.**

These **certificate** programs are generally considered professional in nature and the completion of these programs are noted on the student's official university transcript, if the following conditions are met:

1. The student must apply and be admitted into the certificate program in order to be officially recognized as pursuing the program by the university.
 - a) Some certificate programs may be restricted by degree level or offered only to degree-seeking students, while others are open to all enrolled graduate and post-baccalaureate non-degree students.
 - b) The admissions criteria may include previous educational background, grade point average, or other qualifications.
 - c) For formal admission requirements and procedures, students should contact the department offering the certificate program.
2. The student must apply to the certificate program prior to completing the second course in the program.
 - a) Completing the certification program coursework without proper admission to the program could jeopardize future enrollment opportunities in certificate program courses or the recognition of the completion of the certificate program by the university.
 - b) Once the student has been admitted to the certificate program, the department will notify the Registrar's Office, so it is reflected on the student's official academic record.
 - c) Once the student has completed the last course required for the certificate program, the department will notify the Registrar's Office and the certificate will be posted to the student's official transcript.

In the event that the student completes a degree program prior to completing the requirements for the certificate, the student would be required to be readmitted as a degree seeking or non-degree seeking student to complete the certificate program.

Note: Completion of undergraduate courses will not count toward a graduate certificate. Additionally, students completing an undergraduate degree may not enter a graduate certificate program unless they are admitted as a degree-seeking graduate student or post-baccalaureate non-degree student. Undergraduate students cannot start taking graduate courses for the graduate certificate until the bachelor's degree is awarded.

[...]

Reasoning

This addition reflects current practice for certificate conferral, as all graduate students must have a cumulative GPA of at least a 3.0 (“B”) or better across all graduate-level courses (5000-level or above) applied toward the graduate certificate.

This also aligns with our graduate transfer credit policy as well, which requires that all transfer credit be at least a 3.0 (“B”) or higher to transfer over.

Graduate Policy Committee

Proposed Change to the Definition of Full-Time Enrollment for Graduate Students

(Approved by GPC on December 4, 2023)

Proposed Implementation Date: Fall 2024

Introductory Comments

- The current official standard full-time load for graduate students for university purposes is 12 hours per semester; however, many graduate programs are under the impression that full-time enrollment is 9 hours because a large number of graduate students are receiving assistantships as RAs or TAs who enroll for 9 hours.
- Needless to say, our university's full-time enrollment definition has caused considerable confusion across campus.

Benefits to Students

- Reduces,
 - Financial and time to degree costs by eliminating “dummy” hours
 - Debt
 - Anxiety
 - Enrollment burdens on athletes, veterans, and LACS students
- Increases,
 - Seats available to interested students due to no longer occupied “dummy” hours
 - Up to \$10k more per year for many student veterans
- Aligns requirements for domestic and international students

Departmental Benefits

- Reduces,
 - Administrative effort to “juggle” course scheduling and student enrollment to satisfy the 12-hour full-time requirement
 - Mis-advisement due to discrepancy of requirements between international students, students in one of the 5 qualifying job codes, and all other students
- Increases,
 - Opportunity to recruit and retain all students, and especially veterans, athletes, and Latin American Caribbean (LAC) Scholarship students.

Comparison to Other Institutions

- A 9-hour full-time enrollment policy aligns FSU with,
 - All other Florida institutions
 - The majority (~75-80%) of the Top 25 publics

Enrollment Aspects

- Benefits that remain unchanged include,
 - Graduate students can still opt to take more than 9 hours, e.g. for academic program, fellowship, or external funding agency requirements.
 - The maximum number of graduate credit hours per semester will remain at 15.
 - The “half time” definition will remain at 6 credit hours.
- Due the recent, dramatic (40-50%) increase in Graduate Student Credit Hours, the short-term loss in credit hours will be much smaller than the recent gains.

Additional Support

- On Oct. 16th, 2023 the 31st Congress of Graduate Students passed Resolution #5 proclaiming full support in favor of FSU changing its full-time enrollment policy for graduate students from considering 12 credits to be full time to considering 9 credits.
- A change to a 9-hour full-time enrollment definition will not impact federal aid requirements or international graduate students for federal immigration reporting purposes.
- Both General Counsel and Financial Aid have no concerns about this proposed change.

Current Policy from the Graduate Bulletin and Possible Changes:

(Suggested/Possible changes are shown in red and strikethrough)

Student Course Load

Recipients of stipends from the University, whether holders of fellowships or assistantships, must be full-time students as defined below. Non-degree seeking students are not required to obtain underload permission.

The University reserves the right to determine full-time status based on course and/or research load and stage of degree completion.

~~For g~~ Graduate assistantship holders of **appointments that combine to** a quarter-time or greater ~~appointment~~, **nine 9-**credit hours per semester is defined as a full-time load for those university policies that require a student to be considered full-time. Academic deans or designees may grant exceptions to this policy for teaching assistants in those departments which conform to national course load policies in their disciplines. For graduate students receiving a university or externally-funded fellowship as defined by the Office for Graduate Fellowships and Awards, ~~twelve 9-~~**nine 9-**credit hours per semester constitutes a full-time load.

The maximum number of credit hours which a graduate student may carry without special permission is fifteen. A heavier load may be permitted by the student's academic dean or designee. Included in the calculation of student load are individualized graduate credit hours other than formal coursework, such as credit hours in thesis or dissertation, in directed individual study, in supervised research, and in supervised teaching.

Students who wish to register for fewer than ~~twelve 9-~~credit hours per semester must initiate the request, have it approved by the student's faculty advisor, and it may require written approval from their academic dean or designee prior to registration. Guidelines for dean's level approval vary by college and are available at respective Dean's Offices. **An approved Tuition Underload Form may be needed, when applicable.**

Enrollment designation of full-time or half-time is a key element in determining eligibility for Financial Aid awards. Financial Aid eligibility is determined by the requirements set forth by the type of loan, scholarship, grant, fellowship, etc. and may require a student to enroll in more than 9 hours to meet the eligibility requirement for full-time enrollment. To be eligible to receive Financial Aid, all graduate students must be enrolled for at least six credit hours per semester. To maintain eligibility for financial aid (federal, state, or institutional), students must be enrolled at least half-time. For financial aid purposes, graduate students at FSU must be enrolled for a minimum of 6-credit hours each semester to be eligible for financial aid.

Standard Full-Time Load and Underload Definition

The standard full-time load for graduate students for certification purposes is ~~twelve~~ **9-** credit hours per semester, unless otherwise noted. Some departments may permit students to register for less than full-time enrollment, also called an underload. This part-time, underload registration may consist of individualized graduate credit hours and must be initiated by the student, approved by the student's faculty advisor, and may require approval by the academic dean or designee. Guidelines for dean's level approval vary by college and are available at respective Dean's Offices. **An approved Tuition Underload Form may be needed, when applicable.**

Master's Students

Master's students completing a coursework-only program need to meet full-time or minimum enrollment requirements as described in the other sections. Master's students on the thesis or project track must complete a minimum of six thesis or project hours for the master's degree. They need not be enrolled in thesis or project hours continuously after completing six thesis or project hours as long as they meet the minimum university requirement for full-time enrollment through other coursework. Master's students may be able to register for the university minimum enrollment of two credit hours per semester. The decision to register for two credits must be initiated by the student, approved the student's faculty advisor, and may require approval by the academic dean or designee. Guidelines for dean's level approval vary by college and are available at respective Dean's Offices. **An approved Tuition Underload Form may be needed, when applicable.** Before registering, the student must consult with the major professor as to the proportion of time to be devoted to thesis or project work. A master's student must be enrolled in a minimum of two thesis or project hours in the semester of graduation.

Doctoral Students

After completing the required coursework, passing the Preliminary Examination, submitting an Admission to Candidacy form to the Office of the Registrar, and continuing to use campus facilities and/or receiving faculty supervision, but **not yet having been cleared by the Manuscript Clearance office**, a full-time student shall register for a minimum of two credit hours of dissertation per semester, including Summer term, plus additional credit hours adding up to the required full-time load, until completion of the degree. A student also must be enrolled in a minimum of two hours of dissertation in the semester of graduation as part of any full-time load or underload. Some students may be eligible to register for an underload. Such an underload may consist of two credit hours of dissertation per semester (or term) until completion of degree, plus any additional credit hours deemed necessary by the student's major

professor, adding up to less than a full-time load. Such an underload constitutes minimum enrollment on a part-time basis and does not equate to full-time enrollment. Underload requests must be initiated by the student, approved by the student's faculty advisor, and may require approval by the academic dean or designee. Guidelines for dean's level approval vary by college and are available at respective Dean's Offices. **An approved Tuition Underload Form may be needed, when applicable.** Before registering for dissertation hours, the student must consult the major professor as to the proportion of time to be devoted to dissertation work.

F-1 and J-1 International Graduate Students

The "Standard Full-Time Load and Underload Definition" and the "Doctoral Students" sections do not apply to F-1 and J-1 students, except where specified. F-1 or J-1 international students meet federal enrollment requirements with enrollment in a minimum of nine credit hours in the fall and spring semesters while completing required course work and the university's required minimum number of thesis (6), project (6), or dissertation (24) credit hours. After completion of required coursework and the required minimum number of thesis, project or dissertation credit hours, F-1 or J-1 graduate students may be able to register for the university minimum enrollment requirement of two credit hours per semester until completion of degree after consulting with the academic advisor or the major professor as to the proportion of time to be devoted to thesis, project, or dissertation work. For F-1 and J-1 doctoral students, the minimum enrollment requirement of two hours per semester or term must be fulfilled by registering for a minimum of two dissertation hours per semester or term until graduation. F-1 and J-1 master's students should follow the "Master's Students" section above. Minimum enrollment registration requests must be initiated by the student, approved by the student's faculty advisor, and may require approval by the academic dean or designee. Guidelines for dean's level approval vary by college and are available at respective Dean's Offices. The student's academic advisor, academic dean or designee, assistantship, department, or scholarship may require additional enrollment.

Policies and conditions that will remain unchanged given the possible new language above:

By defining full-time enrollment as 9 hours, the following will be unchanged:

- All graduate students who are receiving assistantships as RAs or TAs (under one of the qualifying appointment codes) must continue to enroll in a minimum of 9 hours. Students on fellowships (internal or external) must continue to enroll in a minimum of 9 hours as stipulated by the fellowship conditions and requirements.

- For international graduate students, including self-payers, federal immigration and SEVIS reporting requirements require that international (F-1 or J-1) students meet a full course of study with enrollment of a minimum of 9 hours in the Fall and Spring semesters.
- Students pursuing an undergraduate degree, who may be taking graduate-level courses as part of a BS/MS Combined Pathway, will still be required to meet the standard full-time course load for undergraduates, as noted in the General Bulletin.
- This change does not impact the other existing policies pertaining to full-time enrollment of thesis/dissertation hours or final term registration.
- Graduate students who are not enrolled full-time, per policy, will still be required to seek underload permission, which may require approval from their Academic Dean's Office. Domestic students not on an assistantship or fellowship may continue to opt for part-time status with the approval of their program.

This new full-time definition would still be compatible with us retaining our half-time definition to being 6 hours.

In addition, this change would have zero perturbation on students engaged in BS/MS Combined Pathways programs.

What other Florida Peer Institutions are doing

All Florida institutions set full-time registration for their graduate students in Fall/Spring at 9 hours, which puts FSU at a competitive disadvantage in terms of recruitment and retention.

University Name	Full-Time Enrollment for Fall/Spring
Florida State University (FSU)	12 hours
University of Florida (UF)	9 to 12 hours
Florida A&M University (FAMU)	9 hours
Florida International University (FIU)	9 hours
University of Central Florida (UCF)	9 hours
University of North Florida (UNF)	9 hours
University of South Florida (USF)	9 hours
Florida Gulf Coast University	9 hours
Florida Atlantic University (FAU)	9 hours

Appendix: COGS Resolution, Oct.16, 2023

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FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY
CONGRESS OF GRADUATE STUDENTS

Resolution

31st Congress of Graduate Students

Resolution #: 5

Sponsored by: Representative Wesner

Date: October 16th, 2023

Whereas: Florida State University's current [FSU Graduate Bulletin](#) under Standard Full-Time Load and Underload Definitions deems full-time graduate student status at twelve credit hours which adversely affects graduate student veterans, graduate students who married to veterans, and the children of veterans; and;

Whereas: this policy causes the Department of Veterans Affairs to prorate their G.I. Bill housing stipends to graduate students who are taking less than twelve credits; and;

Whereas: this policy results in the reduction of G.I. Bill payments by a significant amount each month to graduate students, even if they are considered to be enrolled full time by their department; and;

Whereas: the average age of student veterans at Florida State University is 34, and many of these student veterans are employed and have children which hinders their ability to enroll in twelve credits; and;

Whereas: most graduate programs on campus consider students to be in full time status with a 9-credit course load; and;

Whereas: this policy is contrary to the stated values of Florida State University and its student body, which professes to support and honor our veterans and their families.

Be it resolved by the Thirty-First Congress of Graduate Students of Florida State University that: it hereby proclaims full support in favor of Florida State University changing its full-time enrollment policy for graduate students from considering 12-credits to be full time to considering 9-credits or the amount of credits which is considered full time by their department.

Be it finally resolved: That a copy of this resolution be sent to:

Dr. Richard McCullough, President of Florida State University,
Ms. Bridget Birmingham, Faculty Senate President,
Mr. Jackson "Jack" Hitchcock, Student Body President of Florida State University,
Dr. Jim Clark, Provost of Florida State University,
Dr. Mark Riley, Dean of the Graduate School of Florida State University,
Dr. Amy Hecht, Vice President of Student Affairs of Florida State University,
Mr. William (Billy) Francis, Director of the Florida State University Veterans Center.

Read: 10/16/2023

COGS Vote: 17-0-0

Passed: October 16, 2023

CERTIFIED TO THE STUDENT BODY

DocSigned by:
Susan Rogowski
3DAD3CD323A04E1...

DocSigned by:
Speaker of the Congress of Graduate Students

Andrew Johnson
7F085110CA0C41E...

DocSigned by:
SGA Staff Official

Joshua Burns
140E4010FEE974BF...

Deputy Speaker for Finance

Policy for degree program use of zero credit hour classes for academic credit

Academic programs may include zero credit hour academic courses as part of the formal academic curriculum. The purpose of zero credit hour courses is to document key academic milestones or components of the curriculum. Often, these events are singular or time-limited academic instructional events that do not meet the sufficient contact hours to warrant one credit hour. Examples of zero credit hour courses include, but are not limited to: thesis defense, dissertation defense, qualifying exam, portfolio defense, recital attendance/performance, colloquium, and music ensemble. Academic programs may establish variable credit courses that fulfill multiple functions within a degree program, based on the needs of the student. Variable credit courses may be established with zero credit set as an option for the minimum credit allowed.

Zero credit hour courses that are part of the formal degree requirements and curriculum will follow the department curriculum committee procedures established by the faculty and administration responsible for the development, approval, and review of all courses. This includes subsequent review by the appropriate college and university curriculum committees and reporting to the Statewide Course Numbering System. Zero credit hour courses will appear on the student transcript, using the approved course prefix and number and the credit hours tied to the student's registration.

VED 8 January 2024

Adapted from Sara Hamon (Director of Accreditation Analytics) 21 December 2023 at the initiation of Kim Barber (University Registrar)

Proposed Amendment to the Faculty Senate Bylaws

To Amend Section D., Procedure, Item 4

1. The Steering Committee shall appoint annually a parliamentarian.

by striking out the word “annually” and inserting in its place the words “on an annual basis.” To further amend Section D, Item 4 by inserting the following clause: “who is not otherwise a member of the FSU Faculty Senate.”

1. The Steering Committee shall appoint ~~annually~~ a parliamentarian.

The revised item would then read:

4. The Steering Committee shall appoint on an annual basis a parliamentarian who is not otherwise a member of the FSU Faculty Senate.

Draft Resolution regarding suspension of FSU Students for a Democratic Society

February 20, 2024

Whereas the sixteen-month suspension of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), announced by Student Affairs on January 26, 2024, is an administrative action that may contravene fundamental principles of campus free speech; and whereas these principles are established by long tradition and in various official statements, including the 2019 Board of Governors Statement of Free Expression; and whereas the protection of free speech is the responsibility of all leaders of the University, the FSU Faculty Senate requests that the Division of Student Affairs provide the Senate with an explanation of:

- how and by whom the original complaint against SDS was initiated;
- an assessment of the harm caused by the SDS protest, indicating where it outweighs the harm caused to the university community by the suspension of SDS and its effect on the campus free speech climate;
- the decision's apparent contravention of the BOG Statement of Free Expression; and
- the precedent used to arrive at this particular sanction, i.e., instances in which other student organizations were suspended for similar durations, and the grounds of those suspensions.

To ensure that free speech standards are not further violated, we further request that Student Affairs reinstate SDS until the Faculty Senate can evaluate this matter and provide appropriate input on matters of free speech and academic freedom.

Background and Rationale

Members of FSU's Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) attended an [FSU Board of Trustees meeting on November 10, 2023](#), intending to speak during public comment. When they were told that the time for public comment had been changed and that they would not be allowed to speak, they sat in attendance, and a short time later disrupted the meeting and were asked to leave, which they did.

On January 12, 2024, Student Affairs convened a disciplinary hearing, and on January 26 it issued a [letter suspending SDS](#) immediately, and until the end of the 2024-2025 academic year.

As faculty, part of our responsibility is to safeguard the intellectual climate of our campus and to look out for the well-being of our students, who require freedom to explore ideas. We are gravely concerned that this decision curbs the freedom of all students—both members of SDS and non-members—to pursue intellectual growth unhampered by administrative overreach.

As written, the grounds specified in the decision letter are thin, brittle, and essentially punitive of the students. This action does not give our community and our students the information we need in order to guide future actions.

Furthermore, if any penalty is necessary, this penalty seems disproportionate. It is comparable to sanctions imposed on fraternities engaging in much more dangerous behavior--and those sanctions are coupled with remediating support. This blanket long-term suspension, resulting

from a non-violent, non-criminal speech act, adversely affects this student group and the campus climate as a whole.

In one sense, it seems difficult to see how SDS's brief disruption caused any real harm deserving administrative action. The members of the Board of Trustees, like the faculty and staff of FSU, can certainly be expected to accommodate the various manners of expression of the young people we serve, even when it is not the manner we ourselves adopt. This is a normal part of our work.

Because free speech is so crucial to the culture of our university, the standard for harm must be clear and relatively high. For example, unlawful speech such as threats and defamation may meet that standard. Mere brief disruption is not serious harm. It is not clear who initiated this action, or who deemed the action necessary in the first case.

In another sense, continuous faculty senate policy makes it clear that free speech is a cardinal principle of the university, which must be protected as a matter of first importance. The three specific warrants set out in the decision letter—failing to comply with the instructions of a law enforcement official, disrupting university operations, and collective punishment of the group for the delay by a single individual (who was not a member of the group)—do not seem to rise to a level that requires overturning established norms of tolerance of free expression.

The Florida Board of Governors passed a [Statement of Free Expression](#) on April 15, 2019, to which it required all universities to adhere. The Faculty Senate of FSU passed a [Resolution on Civil Discourse and Academic Freedom](#) at its meeting of November 30, 2022.

In its Statement, the Governors assert that it is “important not to stifle the dissemination of any ideas, even if other members of our community may find those ideas abhorrent. Individuals wishing to express ideas with which others may disagree must be free to do so, without fear of being bullied, threatened or silenced....we must not let concerns over civility or respect be used as a reason to silence expression.”

In its final paragraph, the statement speaks of limits: “Each member of our campus communities must also recognize that institutions may restrict expression that is unlawful, such as true threats or defamation.” There is no allegation that SDS engaged in unlawful activity.

The statement then speaks of disruption of procedure: “Because universities and colleges are first and foremost places where people go to engage in scholarly endeavors, it is necessary to the efficient and effective operations of each institution for there to be reasonable limitations on the time, place, and manner in which these rights are exercised.” The crux of the case against SDS is its disruption of a Trustees meeting. On one hand, the disruption did not prevent the “efficient and effective” operation of that meeting. On the other hand, the efficient and effective operation of the Board of Trustees ought to include hearing comments from the public and from members of the university, including the student members of SDS. It is reasonable for students to expect that their comment will be accommodated, and understandable for them to feel that

their free expression is hampered by what they perceive to be a pattern of last minute schedule changes.

In its last sentence, the statement describes a very limited scope for limitations on this free speech policy: “These limitations are narrowly drawn and content-neutral and serve to ensure that all members of our campus communities have an equal ability to express their ideas and opinions, while preserving campus order and security.” It seems doubtful that the heavy sanction imposed by Student Affairs on SDS accords with this standard.

The 2022 [Final Report of the BOG Civil Discourse Initiative](#) assigns the task of protecting free expression to all leaders of the University: Trustees, the President, Academic and Student Affairs, student government, and the faculty senate.