

**Middle Georgia State University  
Faculty Affairs Committee  
February 23, 2024**

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**(1) Call to Order**

The Faculty Affairs Committee (“the Committee”) was called to order at 9:00am on Friday, February 23, 2024 on Microsoft Teams.

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**(2) Roll Call**

**Present**

- Buffenmyer, Luke
- Camara, Louis
- Causey, Kelly
- Frazier, Javan
- Fuller, Dawn
- Funches, Amanda
- Hagler, James
- Hornung, Chris (Chair)
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**Not Present**



- **Buffenmyer** responded that if the Committee proposes both 6 and 8 hours, then the ultimate policy will require 8 hours.
- **Steven Wallace** concurred that reduction of hours will not get past the Provost and President.

**Rod McRae** asked if the “not to exceed” clause is needed, given that both proposed versions of the policy include an hours-per-course-taught statement.

- **Wallace** responded that it is required, because if faculty members teach more than 4 courses, their office hours requirement will go beyond 8 hours.

**Wallace** added that option 2 does not preclude a chair/dean requiring that all office hours be face-to-face—it says that more than half may not be virtual. Thus, the proposed policy may take away some degree of flexibility.

- **Hornung** noted that the current policy (as shared by the subcommittee) requires all on-campus hours, which means that the proposed policy would increase flexibility.
- **McRae** shared the current policy from the handbook:

Faculty availability to students outside the regularly scheduled class hours is an essential element to student success and to faculty performance. Faculty members are required to be available to students through posted office hours as well as through ~~virtual~~ means, such as telephone and campus email, which facilitate student access to faculty members. AtudentJ 3t.t cSm[xao B0.11 -1.13 (e)4(nt)-2 ( ac)4 (c)4 (e)42scsess an( t)-2 (hr)-1 (ough pos)-1 Asrs through post (t)-2 -2 (ac)4 (ul) p (ntJ 3nn (e)4(ng 15 Td [(s)--1 (t)-2 (udond of)-2 as ( t)-2 (h e-1 (txt)-2 (e)4 (s)-1 (s)-1d sred oflicck. 2milit tok:

- **Whiddon** responded that she ties her office hours to when classes start and end for the term.
- **Hagler** agreed that is what most faculty do but reiterated the need to clarify the requirement.

**McRae** asked if the term “faculty members” in the faculty handbook refers to both full-time and part-time instructors. He highlighted that there are many part-time faculty members teaching from a variety of places and that requiring certain hours in certain places might put them in a bind.

- **Javan Frazier** shared from the handbook: 4.01.01 Definition of Faculty The faculty shall consist of the corps of instruction and the administrative officers as defined in Section 3.2 of the Policy Manual of the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia. Full time Professors, Associate Professors, Assistant Professors, Lecturers, Senior Lecturers, teaching personnel with other titles approved by the Board of Regents, and duly certified librarians (BOR Policy Manual 3.2.1.1, 8.1.1).

**Wallace** suggested keeping the proposed policy (option 2) but removing all language related to caps on modality, which could lead to something like someone being required to be in the office for one hour every week over the summer when it would make more sense that they could be entirely online.

- **Buffenmyer** asked if that could mean that hours could potentially be entirely online.
- **Whiddon** asked if the policy should at least mention virtual hours, because if it doesn't mention it, the assumption could be that the policy requires all on-campus hours.
- **Hagler** suggested that modality of office hours should be related to modality of course delivery—fully online instructors could offer all of their office hours online, whereas partially online instructors could offer some of their office hours online.

**Louis Camara** noted that some students who live on-campus and take online courses would prefer to come to in-person office hours.

- **Wallace** responded that they could meet with professors by appointment.
- **Hornung** added that requiring in-person hours could put entirely online faculty in a bind (that they would have to work out on a case-by-case basis with their chairs).

**Camara** added that the way that some courses in his department are originally scheduled face-to-face and then shifted online, so students who did not opt to meet online are ultimately required to do so.

- **Fuller** suggested that there may be some variation among departments, where some topics are easier to ask questions about in person.
- **Camara** highlighted that the policy needs to reflect what is best for MGA's students.
- **Whiddon** noted that the Committee is trying to make sure to include the varying needs of faculty members in the policy.

**Hornung** suggested that getting rid of the words “on campus” (from option 2) would allow all faculty members to adopt office hour locations that makes sense for them but may not address Wallace's concern about a chair/dean requiring on-campus presence.

- **Camara** suggested that the policy should not be left too open, so that all faculty members shift entirely online for office hours.

**Buffenmyer** proposed a new round of edits on the policy (option 2), taking all of the comments made today into consideration.

- **Hornung** suggested adding language that refers to “office hours matching the modality of the class.”

**Kelly Causey** moved to table this discussion until next month's meeting.

- **Frazier** seconded.
- The motion **passed unanimously**.

## (B) ThankA-Professor Updates

**Chris Hornung** noted that the Thank-A-Professor

by the 11<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup>. Most of the voting should be done before Spring Break (or perhaps the week after Spring Break), because the Provost's Office will want the information at least a week before the Honors Convocation. All updates will be shared through email before the Committee's next meeting.

**Steven Wallace** asked if the award winners would still be announced during Honors Convocation.

- **Hornung** confirmed.

#### (D) Charges for 2024-2025

**Chris Hornung** reminded the Committee of its obligation to create three or four charges for next year's Committee. Last year, the Committee carried over the summer salary discussion and the faculty office hours discussion.

**Luke Buffenmyer** asked for clarification regarding the Committee's scope/purpose.

- **Steven Wallace** noted that the Committee is the caretaker of the Faculty Handbook.
- **Hornung** added that this means that everything that falls into the handbook is considered part of the Committee's purview, although there are some things that are covered by other committees, too (the Executive Committee, the Promotion and Tenure Committee, etc.). The Committee is primarily responsible for the handbook and faculty awards.
- **Javan Frazier** noted that anyone is welcome to bring up points about promotion and tenure in this Committee or reach out to him with questions, since more eyes on these policies can only improve them.
- **Rod McRae** shared the information he was given about the Committee's scope:

Function: The Faculty Affairs Committee shall, except where policies of the Board of Regents of the University System of G1 (r)4 (an]TJ ( )w)2 f -1.154 (bout)-2sher6 C/,D 37 >>B,.1

Academic Enhancement Committee and the Teaching Resources and Budgetary Allocation Committee to strengthen their shared objectives.

- **Wallace** noted that the Student Academic Enhancement Committee is going to change, so the Committee may need to get rid of that phrase.

**Hornung** concluding by calling again for the current Committee to consider charges for next year's Committee.

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### **(6) Next Meeting**

The Committee's next meeting will be Friday, March 29 at 9:00 am on Microsoft Teams.

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### **(7) Adjourning**

**Steven Wallace** moved to adjourn the meeting.

- **Javan Frazier** seconded the motion.
  - The motion **passed unanimously**.
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