



## **Faculty Senate Meeting – August 15, 2019**

### **President's Report**

Theme:

Rising Higher: Fulfilling the Promises

Welcome to the 2019-2020 academic year! I trust that you have had a relaxing summer and are ready to engage our students with your teaching, research and service expertise.

Please join me in welcoming Dr. Linda Noble, the executive vice president for academic policies. Since Dr. Laney's departure, Dr. Noble has been fulfilling duties previously held by the provost. We are beginning a national search this month for a new provost and Dr. Noble has agreed to chair the search committee.

Many of you attended the Savannah State University Fall General Assembly and listened to a presentation on customer service. Customer service must be a priority for us. We want to make sure that our students have all of the resources and support they need to be successful. We want them engaged and encouraged to succeed. We want to recognize quickly when they need extra assistance and guide them to the appropriate resources.

We have adopted the theme "Rising Higher: Fulfilling the Promises" for this academic year. As I mentioned at the general assembly, those promises are providing a quality education, getting our students to graduation, retaining talented faculty and staff and providing high quality customer service.

Enrollment, especially student retention, continues to be a challenge. We need your help in retaining our top students. We also need your assistance in recruiting students. I encourage you and your department chairs to work with admissions recruiters to make them fully aware of your programs, enabling them to increase the number of students seeking to enroll in your respective disciplines.

We are working tirelessly to completely enrollment of more than 3,500 students and encourage them to take the appropriate number of credit hours, 15 per semester, to graduate in four years.

Our faculty are doing great things in the academy. Dr. Kisha Aites, assistant professor of engineering technology education, was selected to serve on the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education HBCU Teacher Education Topical Action Group (TAG). The group is dedicated to the support and advancement of HBCU Teacher Education programs. Mr. Willie Brooks, assistant professor of criminal justice, was selected to the editorial board for the Madridge Journal of Social and Behavioral Sciences. Dr. Jonathan Elmore, was selected to participate in The Environmental Humanities Summer Institute at Colby College, August 5-10. He presented excerpts from his current book project: *The Speculative Era: Five Theses for the Last Humans*. Dr. Teresa Shakespeare, associate professor of biology, participated as a 2019 Governor's Teaching Fellow for the summer symposium program at the University of Georgia. She is also developing a collaborative Nutritional Biology Graduate Admissions Pathway Program between the University of California Davis and Savannah State. Congratulations! Please continue to share your faculty good news stories with us.

Have a great academic year! Thank you!



## **Faculty Senate Meeting – October 1, 2019 President's Report**

Theme: Rising Higher: Fulfilling the Promises

Since the last meeting of the Faculty Senate, we prepared for a hurricane and continued to cope with summer temperatures though it is clearly fall, according to our calendars. We celebrated the continuance of class instruction though technology when we closed the campus for a week under hurricane evacuation orders in early September and we mourned the passing of our student, Karissa Tatum. Please join me in a moment of silence. Karissa's family thanks faculty for your support during this time of bereavement.

Several changes in the administration have occurred since the last meeting. Dr. Reginald Leseane is serving as interim provost and vice president for Academic Affairs, while we conduct a national search for a provost. Annette Ogletree-McDougal is the new vice president for Marketing and Communications. We started a number of searches for key academic positions at the university during the summer. The searches have been completed. Dr. Sametria McFall is the assistant vice president of Academic Affairs. After two years as interim dean, Dr. Muhamad Mustafa is now the dean of the College of Sciences and Technology. Dr. Sudesh Mujumdar is the new dean of the College of Business Administration. Dr. Shannon Mathews has joined us as dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences. You can read more about our colleagues on the SSU website: <https://www.savannahstate.edu/>.

We have been busy finalizing enrollment for fall semester. As of this past Friday, our enrollment was 3,684 students. I thank you for working with our students and colleagues to get students enrolled for classes this fall. However, we are experiencing a decline in enrollment, which will result in a reduction in our tuition and fees revenue for this fiscal year. We are hopeful to address the reduction by eliminating vacant positions and instituting a hiring freeze (except for very necessary positions).

Some faculty members have raised concern about technology in the classrooms, particularly in the Drew-Griffith Hall, with the Sony interactive boards and whiteboards. The damaged interactive boards are being replaced, signage warning about how boards can be damaged is being placed at each board and faculty training on proper use of the boards will be offered. Whiteboards are being added where possible. Going forward, our information and technology colleagues will work with faculty to determine the technology that best meets their needs.

I received a message from the Senate leadership last evening requesting that I address overload pay policy. Please be aware that we will be reviewing our policies and practices in several areas (e.g., faculty workload, overload pay, teaching for eCore, outside employment, conflict of interest, etc.) to make sure we are in line with Board of Regents policy and meeting instructional needs as effectively and efficiently as possible. Dr. Leseane and I will establish a taskforce that includes faculty representation to look at these policies.

We are in challenging fiscal times and changing policies and practices that cost the institution more money will be difficult to justify. However, we are committed to reviewing and changing policies in a fiscally responsible manner.

Dr. Cora Thompson and Dr. Chaundra Creekmur are presenting at the State Higher Education Executive Officers Association (SHEEO) Conference this week. Their SHEEO presentation is titled “Summit on Project Pipeline Repair: Restoring Minority and Male Participation.” Dr. Shalonda Mullgrav has been selected to participate in the University System of Georgia’s Executive Leadership Institute. Dr. Asad Yousuf and his team—Drs. Ying Liu, Alex Kalu, and Alberto De La Cruz—have received a \$741,422 Minority Science and Engineering Improvement Program grant from the U.S. Department of Education. The three-year project, which begins today, is titled “Creating Access to Cybersecurity Education for Minorities and Women.” October is National Cybersecurity Awareness Month. Dr. Agegnehu Atena and Dr. Carol Pride have received a \$999,997 grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF). The five-year grant, which also begins today, supports 30 financially needy and academically talented students, who are STEM majors, in attaining their degrees. Congratulations!

Thank you!



**Faculty Senate Meeting – January 14, 2020  
President's Report**

***Theme: Rising Higher: Fulfilling the Promises***

Welcome back to campus. I hope that you relaxed during the winter break and that you are reinvigorated and eager to help our students succeed this semester.

Since our last meeting, we held a successful Founders Day observance, graduated 240 students, and conducted our annual spring general assembly. If you have not completed the evaluation for the assembly, please do. The committee and I value your input. Please join me in thanking the planning committee, which included faculty members Dr. Aites, Dr. McFall, Dr. Rivera and Dr. Thompson-Norton.

This morning, I participated in an exit meeting with the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB). AACSB is the body that accredits business schools/colleges. Members of the site visit team told me how much they appreciated the warm reception they received here at Savannah State University, the information received in advance of the visit and the pleasant interactions with faculty, staff, students and community leaders. According to them, it was a good visit. Kudos to the College of Business Administration (COBA) for your hard work on continuing COBA's accreditation. I was pleased with the positive responses from the site visit team.

In an effort to support our faculty and staff's optimal effectiveness, and ultimately the success of our SSU students, we will be gathering and sharing information about how employees perceive the institution as a learning organization. Effective learning organizations are those where people continually expand their capacity to create desired results, where new ways of thinking and innovation are nurtured, and where people are continually learning how to learn together—the very heart of an institution of higher learning. The university's ability to pivot and react to changes, especially in times of pressure, will help us meet strategic goals—and contribute to employees being able to improve efficiency and customer service. We are currently working with SSU's Institutional Review Board and are planning on conducting a campus-wide survey of all employees that will help us gauge our employees' perceptions of Savannah State as a learning organization. Please look for the invitation to complete the survey in the next few weeks. I encourage all of you to participate. Your responses will be anonymous and will help us enhance the future of SSU.

We also are developing an academic dashboard to provide key data and information to faculty and academic administrators to help improve student outcomes. You will hear more about the dashboard from Dr. Leseane.

Our strategic hiring process has extended beyond the campus. Once we approve a hiring request internally, for salaries above \$40,000, we must send the request to our colleagues at the University System of Georgia for approval. It is extremely important that we provide solid justifications for all hiring requests and determine that filling a position is the most viable option to get the work done. Our Human Resources Office will answer question and assist you with the process. All USG institutions are required to follow the new strategic hiring protocol.

Thanks to your efforts and our amazing students, I am excited to report that we have nominated J'Zaria Simpson as our representative for the 2020 University System of Georgia Academic Recognition Day, February 11, 2020. The junior biology major holds a 4.0 grade point average and spends time on campus tutoring students in chemistry, biology, organic chemistry and pre-calculus.

Congratulations to Savannah State University student Schonn Franklin, Dr. Iancu and those of you who have supported Shonn. The senior political science major has been named a 2020 Charles B. Rangel International Affairs Fellow. The fellowship is awarded to only 30 students annually and is designed to attract and prepare outstanding young people for careers as diplomats in the Foreign Service of the U.S. Department of State. In addition to a stipend of \$16,000 per year for two years, Rangel Fellows receive up to \$21,500 annually toward tuition and fees for completion of an approved two-year master's program in international affairs or another major related to the Foreign Service. The fellowship program also includes a 10-week internship on Capitol Hill as well as a 10-week overseas internship at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate during the summer between the first and second years of graduate school. Each Rangel Fellow who successfully completes the fellowship program requirements commits to a minimum of five years of service in an appointment as a Foreign Service Officer in the U.S. Department of State.

Last fall, Marine Sciences faculty partnered with the Oglethorpe Charter School (OCS) Robotics and Marine Sciences Program to build and deploy three satellite-tracked drifters, which have an endurance of nearly a year at sea. The drifters were constructed as part of SSU's undergraduate Oceanographic Instrumentations course, led by Dr. Hintz and OCS's robotics class. The drifters are flowing with ocean currents and are being tracked by satellite GPS and communications to relay their position back twice a day to a national database that all of the students can access and monitor.

We are grateful to Dr. Pride, Dr. Hoskins-Brown and Dr. Hintz for helping us to host Gov. Kemp's recent on-campus visit to Marine Sciences on December 18<sup>th</sup>. The governor had an opportunity to see one of our signature programs and was impressed.

We now have a permanent police chief. Many of you may have met Frederick Hammett at the general assembly. Chief Hammett is busy assessing and updating our public safety unit and developing policies and protocols to improve campus safety. He brings more than 27 years of public safety experience to Savannah State. We look forward to working with him.

Our enrollment services offices have relocated to Hill Hall on the first and second floors. Telephone numbers remain the same. Please visit our website ([www.savannahstate.edu](http://www.savannahstate.edu)) for specific office locations.

Thank you!



**Faculty Senate Meeting – February 4, 2020  
President's Report**

***Theme: Rising Higher: Fulfilling the Promises***

We are fully engaged in spring semester. I trust that classes are progressing and we remain focused on student success. We remain focused on enrollment for spring semester and are a few student short of our goal of 3,155 students. However, the challenge to increase enrollment, with a focus on retention, continues. Please reach out to Raymond Clarke, our vice president for enrollment management, with your ideas and energy in helping us recruit and retain the best and brightest students.

Justin Janney is the new interim vice president for business and financial affairs, effective Feb. 1. Mr. Janney comes to us from Georgia Southern University. He has a solid background in business and finance. You will hear more about the appointment soon. Elaine Campbell is returning to her role as chief audit officer and will remain an active member of the executive leadership team. We are grateful to her for assisting the university, as interim vice president for business and financial affairs, during a time of great transition.

We have had some challenges in a couple of our buildings. An odor in the Sciences and Technology Building led to us taking the building offline a couple of times to eradicate the problem causing the odor. We located the problem, a dry drain, which was causing the odor. Experts have advised us to install drain traps to prevent the backflow of fumes into the building. We will follow their advice and we are monitoring the situation.

The Student Union is offline for maintenance, deep cleaning and sanitizing. While the process is taking a bit longer than we originally anticipated, we have asked colleagues from the health department and local extermination experts to certify the spaces after maintenance and cleaning. They have done so and we are in the final cleaning stage to reopen the facility as quickly as possible.

Problems in these two facilities were brought to our attention by students, faculty and staff, which demonstrates the importance of letting us know when things aren't as they should be. When you see something, say something. Our students and you are important to us and we want to ensure that you are teaching and learning in an appropriate environment.

As of Jan. 30, the U.S. State Department adjusted its travel advisory for China from "Reconsider Travel to China" to "Do Not Travel." Based on this guidance and the Centers for Disease Control's recommendations related to the new strain of coronavirus, the University System of Georgia and its institutions will NOT approve travel to China effective immediately. This includes spring semester study abroad, conferences and research. Summer study abroad programs and travel should continue to be assessed with contingency plans in case the current levels remain in place.

The Savannah Black Heritage Festival is underway. A full calendar of events is planned for the month of February. Please visit [www.savannahblackheritagefestival.org](http://www.savannahblackheritagefestival.org) for a full listing. This evening there will be a Hiplet Ballerinas Performance at 7:30 at the Savannah Civic Center, Johnny Mercer Theatre, 301 Oglethorpe Ave. Admission is free but you may want to arrive early for good seats. Savannah State University and the City of Savannah are major sponsors of the festival.

Kudos to Dr. Dionne Hoskins-Brown and alumna Kelli Edwards who showcased our Marine Sciences Program at the Georgia Alumni Associations of Historically Black State Universities 35<sup>th</sup> Annual Legislative

Conference in Atlanta on Jan. 29. They represented us exceptionally well at the conference where Savannah State, Albany State and Fort Valley State universities presented information on centers of excellence. We look forward to more faculty, students and alumni sharing their impressive Savannah State successes, initiatives and signature programs.

Thank you!



**Faculty Senate Meeting – April 14, 2020  
President's Report**

***Theme: Rising Higher: Fulfilling the Promises***

I hope that you and your families are staying healthy in wake of the coronavirus—COVID-19 and following Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines to help control the spread of the virus. Please go to [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov) for information on good cleaning habits, what to do if you think you have been exposed to the virus and COVID-19 updates. Please also adhere to directives to shelter-in-place in your areas, as appropriate. With all of us working together, we can slow the spread of this pandemic.

We greatly appreciate all that you are doing to assist us in offering online courses to our students during this difficult time. We likely will be providing this pedagogy into the summer semester.

Dr. Leseane has advised me that there is ongoing training for online teaching and learning for both faculty and students. We encourage you to take advantage of the training. Academic Affairs will be meeting virtually with the colleges to discuss curriculum alignment for the coming academic year.

To date, 1,755 students have registered for fall semester. Please encourage students in your online classes to complete the registration process as soon as possible.

The Academic Affairs Policy Taskforce has completed its review of policies related to faculty workload, overload, the use of adjunct professors, course release, independent study and eCore instruction approval that will help us work more efficiently and effectively. I have received and accepted the taskforce's recommendations and look forward to the Faculty Senate taking action on them.

I am excited to share with you that professors in the Department of Fine Arts are using 3D technology to create masks that may be used to help control the spread of COVID-19. Professor Silberg and Dr. Plothe are working with a community partner to prepare the mask for production and distribution. Their effort has been reported by news media. Congratulations!

Kudos to the College of Business Administration for a successful reaccreditation process. The college received notice April 13 from the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) that its Board of Directors had ratified the recommendation for extension of accreditation.

I am grateful to those faculty members and staff who assisted with the university's task to move 1,750 students out of campus housing in March. Thanks to your help and the diligence of our Student Affairs team, the process was successful.

Last week students received \$4.4 million in refunds. The student portion of funding under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act will be drawn down later this week. We are awaiting notice of the university's portion of that funding.

Thank you for all that you do to support student success at Savannah State!





**Faculty Senate Meeting – May 5, 2020  
President's Report**

***Theme: Rising Higher: Fulfilling the Promises***

Thank you for working with Savannah State University students to get them through this difficult semester. We know that it has not been an easy task for you but once again, you have risen to the challenge and for that, we are grateful.

We are preparing for a virtual commencement ceremony for approximately 481 students, the largest graduating class in Savannah State's history. The ceremony will be streamed from the Savannah State University website ([www.savannahstate.edu](http://www.savannahstate.edu)) and other social media platforms Saturday, May 9, 2020 at 10 a.m. Please watch and support our students during this very important transition in their lives. Savannah State will participate in the National HBCU Commencement Celebration on May 16. Information is available at <https://www.globenewswire.com/news-release/2020/04/28/2023585/0/en/National-HBCU-Commencement-Celebration-to-Take-Place-on-May-16-2020.html>. We hope to have an in-person ceremony in late summer or in the fall.

As the state of Georgia begins the process of reopening businesses and services, I encourage you to continue those health and safety measures you have been using in recent months to try to contain the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19). We should social distance, continue proper hygiene and sanitizing and wear masks when we are around people with whom we do not live. Updated information on how we can continue healthy practices may be located at [cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov).

We are working with a couple of committees to plan a campus reentry strategy for fall semester. Indications are that University System of Georgia campuses will be open, but offering an academic experience differently than we have done in the past. We fully expect to come to campus for fall semester. We will need to continually sanitize spaces, appropriately distance students in classrooms and ensure that we do not exceed the allowable number of persons gathering on campus at any one given time and place. We also will need to make sure academic support functions are appropriately staffed and organized to keep students, faculty and staff healthy and safe as we continue to try to control the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. We will need to continue some classes online to increase social distancing. We are exploring options for campus reentry. You are encouraged to participate on the committees.

You received a message from the chancellor, last Friday, that our budget challenges will be great as we prepare for the fall semester. All state agencies, including the University System of Georgia, have been asked to reduce budgets by 14 percent for the coming fiscal year (2021), which begins July 1, 2020. As you know, the greater part of our operating expenses is salaries. Therefore, a greater portion of our budget adjustment will affect employee positions. Student success, enrollment, retention, graduation, campus safety and operational efficiency will remain our priorities. The fiscal year 2021 budget will reflect those priorities. Due to our budget situation, we know we will have a reduction-in-force and furloughs.

As always, we will need your support in weathering this challenge.

Thank you for all that you do to support student success at Savannah State and we look forward to working together to get through this budget reduction process and bring 3,000 students to campus for fall semester.